

BI WOMEN

February/March 1996

Vol. 14 No. 1

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

Invisible Lives

by Robyn Ochs

I was very excited to learn that the focus of this issue of BiWomen is on media. Its a topic near and dear to my heart. One of the talks I give on college campuses is called "Representations of Bisexuality in the Media." In the bisexuality seminar I teach we spend a week looking at this topic. And I've appeared on a dozen or so talk shows in the past decade, and have had behind the scenes conversations with producers of at least that many additional talk shows.

All this said, I am not planning to write a long article here. Rather, I want to make one point which I believe goes a long way toward explaining how bisexuals are (mis) represented and misunderstood.

Bisexual people have a problem. We are assumed by others to be gay or lesbian when we are seen with someone of the our own sex, and as straight when with someone of a different sex. We become visible to others only when we proclaim our bisexuality publicly, or when our bisexuality becomes visible at a point of conflict or transition, such as coming out or leaving one relationship for another. Bisexuality thus becomes equated with conflict or transition. Those of us whose lives are unremarkable, who do laundry and scoop litter boxes, who are involved romantically with only one person, or with no one, are invisible, as bisexuals, to the outside viewer.

We can even be invisible to one another. Example (true story/names changed): My close friends "Alice" & "Betty" got married to each other this past fall. Two of their closest women friends, "Carrie" & "Diane", who are married to each other, had a prominent role in their wedding. At the wedding shower and the wedding, "Carrie" & "Di" and I hit it off and a month later they invited me for dinner. ("Alice" & "Betty" were out of town and weren't there). After dinner, the five women present did a little go-around in which each told their coming out stories. "Carrie", when it was her turn to tell her story, came out as bisexual. This was a surprise to me. I asked her whether she was aware that her very close friend "Alice" also identified as bisexual. She was surprised to hear that, and said that while she knew that "Alice" had been involved with men in the past, she had just assumed that "Alice" was a lesbian. No, I replied, bisexual. In fact I had met "Alice" through BBWN, to which she has belonged for more than 10 years. Of course, at the first opportunity I called "Alice" and asked her if she

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Mark Your Calendar!

Bisexual Resource Center

Annual Meeting

Tuesday, February 27, 7 -9 p.m.

29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston

Bi Women in Sci-Fi TV

by Debbie Block-Schwenk

I cannot testify to the presentation of lesbian characters in television at large because I do not watch much TV. As a science fiction fan, my TV watching consists almost solely of *Babylon 5* and the two current Star Trek spin off series, *Voyager* and *Deep Space Nine*. Interestingly, both *Babylon 5* and *Deep Space Nine* featured episodes this past fall in which a female character's bisexuality was explored.

"Divided Loyalties" was the *Babylon 5* episode which focused on the friendship between Susan Ivanova, the first officer of the space station *Babylon 5*, and Talia Winters, a telepath and the Psi-Corps representative to the station. These two women have been gradually growing closer over the course of two years, especially as Talia struggles with her position as a member of the dictatorial psi-corps. In a scene full of double meanings, Talia mentions over breakfast with Susan that her quarters are undergoing repairs and Susan invites Talia to stay with her. Talia agrees, and the viewer is left with little doubt that sexual interest is in each woman's mind.

Unfortunately, the scenes involving the night they spend together are less clear — or perhaps simply less adventurous. While they speak passionately of trusting each other (not necessarily a romantic overture on a station full of conspiracies and hidden dangers), they barely touch on-camera. Susan has only one bed, and it is made clear that the women shared it, but the only scene we see of it is of Talia alone (and clothed in a nightgown), waking up and midnight stroll, isn't there.

As a bi woman, I would have wished for a little more explicitness in the nighttime scenes, especially a clarification as to whether the women had a sexual experience or not. Later incidents in the episode effectively removed Talia from the main plot line of the show and ended their friendship, so the relationship will not (probably) have a chance to develop any further.

Nevertheless, the show's creator, J. Michael

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Volunteers of the Month



Ellyn Ruthstrom

Irene

Carla Imperial

Megan Jewett

Sharon

Fennel

Robyn Ochs

Kate Griffin

Ann Golia

Deborah Levine

And many more
wonderful women!
You know who
you are! Thank
you, thank you,
thank you!

Thanks again!

BBWN Financial Statement January 1, 1995 - December 31, 1995

Balance Forward 1/1/95: 4322.44

Expenses

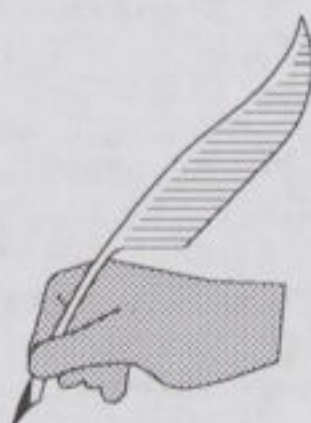
Printing	2811.11
Postage	1061.55
Advertising	87.50
Merchandise	61.78
Postal Fees	129.00
Pride Expenses	163.68
Refreshments	35.92
Office Expenses	250.00
Misc. (taxi)	6.00

Total Expenses 4606.54

Income

Dues	3415.00
Adverstising	270.00
Merchandise	221.02
Bank Interest	41.10

Total Income 3947.12
Balance as of 12/31/95 3663.02
Net Change in 1995 (659.42)



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The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Coming in *BiWomen*

The theme for the April/May issue:

Families/ Bi Family Values

What does **FAMILY** mean to you?

DEADLINE for the April/May issue:

Friday, March 1

The Theme for the June/July issue:

Women of Color

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (DOS or Mac), and include a name or phone number if possible.

If you do **not** want your name published, **please tell us!** Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. **You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.**

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

Summary Minutes: BBWN Meeting December 11, 1995

Attendees: Julie, Ann, Linda, Rosalie, Robyn, Ellyn, Ananda, Debbie, Kate.

An Action Alert was presented describing the activities of a group called the Catholic Action League of Massachusetts. This is a front group for the Christian Coalition which is trying to derail domestic partnership legislation (and no doubt other "pro-gay" legislation) in Massachusetts.

Our on-going discussion about subscription renewals yielded the decision to print the subscription dates on the address labels as an aide to subscribers who may not remember. Look for this change within the next couple of issues.

As methods of gaining new writers (Yes,

Minutes continues on page 9

Class On Bisexuality Inspired Students



Students in Bisexuality Seminar, Fall 1995. Robyn Ochs seated 3rd from left. Gilly Rosenthal standing 4th from left.

by Gilly Rosenthal

When I told my friends I was taking a class on bisexuality at Tufts, reactions were mixed. Some people thought it was cool. One person wanted to know if there was a lab. But most people had trouble understanding how there could be an entire course on bisexuality. As it turns out, the trouble is not finding enough material for a course, but finding enough time to cover everything.

The class met for three hours once a week for thirteen weeks. Each week we focused on a different aspect of bisexuality — bisexual identity, research, bisexuals in popular culture, an anthropological perspective, etc. We were assigned readings on the topic from such books as *Bi Any Other Name*, *Closer to Home*, and *Vice Versa*, as well as photocopied articles from a wide variety of sources. I hope none of my college professors are reading this, because I have to admit this is probably the first time in my life I've done all the required reading for a course - it was *interesting*. We also had to write a weekly journal on the readings, which I found helped me to better focus my thoughts and explore ideas the readings had brought up.

Most of what we did in class was discuss the

readings and topics of the week. But with thirteen students, you can have an awful lot of perspectives. Especially when you consider we had both women and men, students ranging in age from freshman to those of us who haven't seen the inside of a college in years, out bisexuals and heterosexuals and those who chose not to out themselves as anything, people from all sorts of racial and cultural backgrounds... and a teacher who preferred to watch and listen and participate as an equal, rather than lecture to us from her vast experience in the bisexual community. (One paper we read actually called her the "Grandmother of the Bisexual Movement"!)

It was amazing to watch the class dynamic shift as class went on, from a bunch of strangers to a real group. The class was carefully structured to be a safe space for exploration, intellectual as well as personal. It was obvious that the teacher, Robyn Ochs, gave a great deal of thought even to such details as the name of the class, "Contexts and Constructs of Identity: Bisexuality", choosing it so that the word bisexuality would not appear on transcripts for those who did not want their parents to know the nature of the course. She even turned down the Oprah show, who wanted to come tape us, in case anyone would be uncomfortable with that. There was no pressure for anyone to disclose their sexual orientation, but there was respect and appreciation for all orientations and points of view. Everyone was encouraged to talk and share their opinions, but those who could not speak up in class still had a chance to express their thoughts in their journals.

To be honest, I'm not sure why I originally decided to take the class. I think I decided I had explored bisexuality in myself about as much as I could, and was looking to learn more about it in the context of other people and perspectives. But I know I learned as much about myself from this class as I did about bisexuality in general.

Adbill & Ellis Memorial Fund

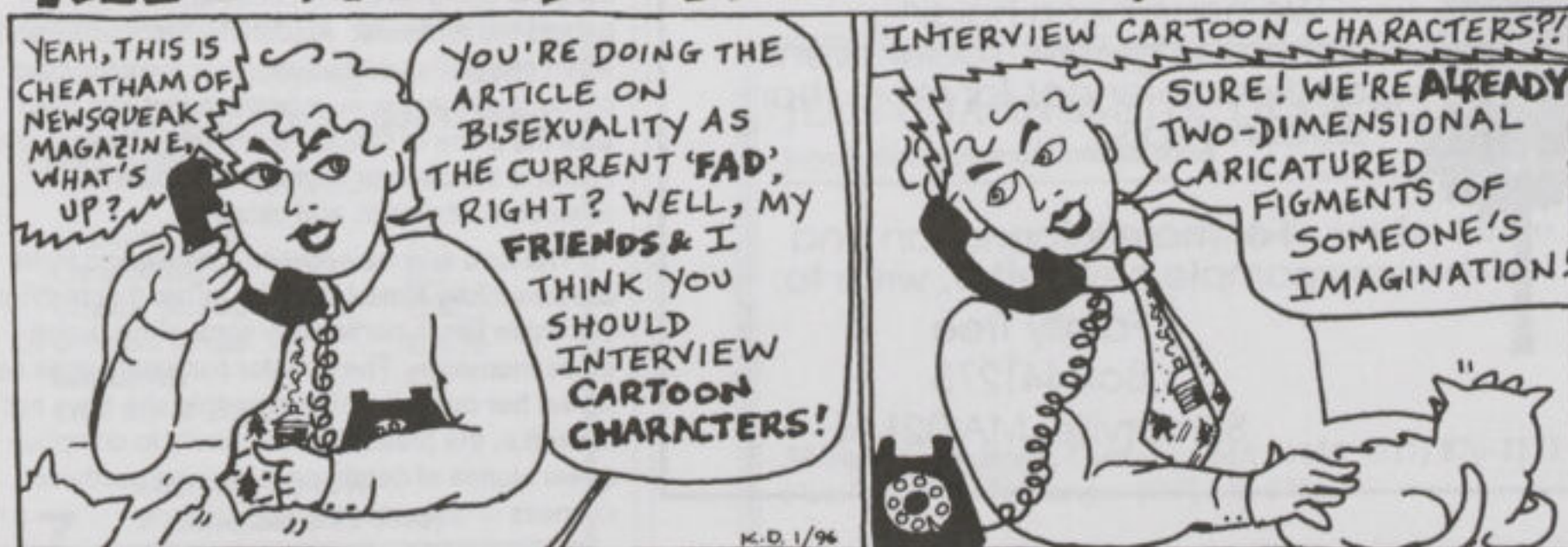
A fund has been established for donations to be made in the memory of two lesbian activists who were murdered recently in Oregon. The fund will benefit Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). Donations may be made payable to the Adbill & Ellis Memorial Fund and sent to: Adbill & Ellis Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 13, Ashland OR 97520.



Volunteers Sought

The Network for Battered Lesbians addresses same-sex domestic violence, provides support to battered lesbian and bisexual women, and works toward the elimination of violence against women. Donations are also needed. For more information, contact the Network at (617) 424-8611.

ALL BI, MYSELF "2-D or nat 2-D" by Kathrine Douthit



The Gay Census

Overlooked Opinions, the nation's only lesbian, gay and bi owned and operated survey firm is conducting GAY CENSUS '96 and urges all gay, lesbian and bi individuals to participate. To participate, simply call 1-800-GAY-VOICE (1-800-429-8642) from a touch tone phone. The survey takes less than ten minutes to complete, and the number is toll-free. TTY is available at 1-800-555-0900.

To find out more about the Gay Census effort and how you can help, call Overlooked Opinions at 1-800-Gay-Census (1-800-429-2367).



Gay and Bisexual Married Men's Group

This support group meets the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at a Boston location. Confidentiality is assured; the group name is interpreted loosely. To get more information, call (617) 625-0330, or (617) 576-9747 for a recorded message.

Sci-Fi from page 1

Straczynski, presented the characters' bisexuality in a matter-of-fact manner without any sensationalism or any indication that this was abnormal behavior (he has stated his belief that in the Babylon 5 world sexual orientation is not an issue which causes anyone any concern). Straczynski has mentioned that he will probably deal with same sex relationships in later episodes of the show; in the meantime I will follow the show and Susan's development eagerly.

Deep Space Nine took a different tack on sexuality in the episode "Rejoined." It featured Jadzia Dax, who unfortunately is a character on a TV show because in a less commercial genre she would be a great model for all kinds of sexual thought experiments. Dax is a member of the Trill, who are a joint species. One part of her is Jadzia, a humanoid female who serves as host for the other part, a worm-like being named Dax. Dax has had seven previous hosts, male and female, and brings all those memories into the communion with Jadzia. Hence, we have an omnisexual, bisexual, transsexual being of the kind you can only get in Science Fiction. Since this is, however, television, the only everyday reference to Dax's unusual makeup is that the Commander of *Deep Space Nine*, having known her previous male host, calls her "old man."

In "Rejoined," a female Trill, Lenara Kahn, arrives as part of a scientific expedition. Kahn (while hosted by the female Nilani) had been married to a previous male host of Dax's, Torias. The marriage had ended tragically when Torias died in a shuttle accident, and the two renew their acquaintance. However, by Trill law each new host must be allowed to experience relationships afresh and to 'reassociate' with a loved one from a previous host's life is punished by permanent

exile, and premature death for the parasitic half of the joint being.

Dax and Kahn are still attracted to each other, however; they remark that their present incarnations seem better suited than did the ones who married. One night they kiss passionately, but don't dare let it go any further. Their passion is tested when an accident with Kahn's experiment traps her in a burning engine room. Dax rescues her and states her intention to love her no matter the consequences. After much agonizing, Kahn rejects Dax because she cannot stand the idea of exile and death for her parasitic half, and leaves her to return to the Trill home world.

Besides the sexy kissing scene, I liked this episode for several reasons. In creating the conflict, the fact that this was woman-woman relationship was irrelevant; a man and a woman would have had the same problem. Nobody questioned the relationship based on the gender of the individuals involved; in fact the first officer wonders why they cannot resume life as "a married couple." Finally, this was bisexual/transsexual science fiction as you rarely read it (and even more rarely see on television) with a woman who had been a man falling in love with a woman she'd loved as that man. Kudos to the producers of *Deep Space Nine* for finally dealing with same-sex issues and having a same-sex kiss on Star Trek.

I'd be happy to show or loan tapes of either episode to anyone interested; just call me at (617) 731-9060. With these episodes as a start off point, the future of bis in space seems promising, indeed.



Night from page 8

encouragement to leave the security of solid ground to fly with her. Flying above convention for the love of a woman or women speaks to our lives, and Rozema does not portray the experience without its pitfalls.

The love story between the two women is the core of the film, but Rozema deftly weaves the subplots going on at the circus and the college behind the romance. A supremely comic touch is when one of the characters runs away from the circus, and there is an intimation that she may take the place of Camille in the jilted Martin's life. (What is the director saying here about the attractions of church and circus?)

The love scenes between Camille and Petra are beautifully filmed, and the music that highlights the entire film is particularly compelling during those moments. The director purposely does not reveal her own sexuality to people she does not know (i.e. the press), but her ability to compose queer stories of depth, passion, and aesthetic richness is unquestionable.



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Bis Bite Back at *Bay Windows*

In our October/November issue, we printed a piece about a biphobic guest editorial by Bruce Bawer that had just appeared in *Bay Windows*. The following week, *Bay Windows* printed four letters to the editor in response to the piece, including two by BBWN stalwarts Robyn Ochs and Marcia Diehl. Their letters are reprinted below.

*Bawer Bites**

O.K., I'll bite. Was Bruce Bawer waiting for some angry bi to write a hissy-fit letter about his guest editorial "Bisexuality and Confusion" in the September 14 *Bay Windows*?

But I've lost my bite — I'm so distraught at not being able to have "a place at the table" in his political house. Oh, well, I'll just go over and sit with Virginia Woolf, Margaret Mead, Eleanor Roosevelt, Leonard Bernstein, Garbo, Deitrich, Frieda Kahlo and John Maynard Keynes. Oh,

Bay Windows continues on page 10

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Bisexuality *Not* in the Media

The December/January issue of *North Bi Northwest*, the Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, contains "A review of the article on Bisexual Women that *Glamour* Magazine wouldn't publish." The authors of a women's health column for *Glamour*, after asking women to write in about their sexual fantasies, discovered that the most common fantasy was about making love with another woman! In response to their findings, they decided to interview seven bisexual women between the ages of 23 to 32. The women talked about their experiences, answering questions that included "What do you get from a woman that you don't get from a man, and what do you get from a man that you don't get from a woman?" and "Are you any different when you are with one sex or another?" The answers to which were mixed, including one participant who felt that she could be more feminine with a woman, while interacting with a man required more control.

The article was supposed to be printed in late 1992, but was scrapped because the editors decided there was not that much interest after all. The authors are trying to get the piece published elsewhere.

North BiNorthwest also reported on two articles in the October 1995 *Playboy*, "Lesbian Chic" and "Lesbians for a Day." Both articles focused on the trendiness of "lesbianism" both in Hollywood and out. Bisexuality is barely mentioned, as Elizabeth Collier comments "within the het category is sex with men and sex with men and women. There is no discussion of being attracted to both women and men, or being able to have an emotional relationship with either a woman or a man (or both). This article just perpetuates the myth that bisexuality doesn't exist."

If you subscribe to *Glamour* magazine, why not write and express your disappointment that the bisexuality article was never published. Likewise, if you read *Playboy* let them know that their "lesbian chic" coverage missed a big point — the bi factor.

Girlfriends Bi-Friendly

The national magazine of the Australian Bisexual Network reprinted an advice column from the July/August issue of *Girlfriends* magazine.

The woman writing was in love with a woman but also seriously involved with a man. Both partners wanted her to settle into a monogamous relationship, but she was uncertain what to do.

The columnist, Pat Califa, advised that "Torn Between Two Lovers" not rush into a hasty choice but take time to examine her bisexuality and her feelings toward monogamy. "There is intense pressure to decide whether men or women are more important and choose a side. But I think this is a poor strategy for lifelong happiness."



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Student Conference

1996 New England Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Student Leadership Conference will be held on February 23-25, 1996 at Clark University in Worcester, MA. The conference is sponsored by BiLaGa, the Bisexual, Lesbian and Gay Alliance of Clark University.

Friday evening includes a performance by lesbian comedienne Georgia Ragsdale. This performance is also open to the public (\$5 with student ID, \$10 for non-students).

Saturday's opening speaker, Lynda Privitera, will speak on "Are We There Yet?: The Spiritual Journey of Gay America and Confronting the Religious Right for Equal Rights." Saturday workshops include spirituality, sexuality, safe sex, coming out and gay history. A Saturday night dance is the day's concluding event.

Sunday's featured speaker is Michelangelo Signorile, the author of "Queer in America" and "Outing Yourself: How to Come Out as Lesbian or Gay to Your Family, Friends, and Co-workers"

continues next page

Bisexuality and the Challenge to Lesbian Existence

By Paula Rust (New York University Press, 1996)

Reviewed by Meghan Foley

Several years ago, Paula Rust conducted a study examining lesbians' perceptions of bisexual women, and bisexual women's perceptions of themselves. Interestingly she found that both bisexual women and lesbians had negative views of bisexual women, to the point of even doubting that bisexuality is a valid identity. The majority of lesbian respondents reported negative and skeptical feelings about bisexual women. Rust uses this book to attempt to understand the source of these negative perceptions and stereotypes.

She argues that the current debate over bisexuality in the lesbian community isn't really about bisexuality, but is rather a continuation of discussions that have been going on since the beginning of the lesbian movement. She says that lesbianism was constructed in the seventies within the traditions of ethnicity and feminism. Because it was using two different modes of creating itself, it contains inherent contradictions. Within lesbian communities, it is not necessary to agree upon one definition or ideology in order for each woman to feel part of a movement. But the contradictions within lesbianism become apparent in discussions about bisexuality. The definition of bisexuality depends upon one's definition of lesbianism, so that the internal discordance becomes visible. Rust goes into a fascinating discussion of the ways in which lesbianism has been constructed historically, how these definitions contradict each other, and the problems that have arisen as a result.

I found this book personally extremely helpful. In the introduction, Rust says "I no longer conceptualize sexuality as essential. I no longer see myself 'as' anything. The question of whether I am bisexual (or whether anyone else is) depends on how one defines bisexuality." (p. 4) I strongly agree with this idea.

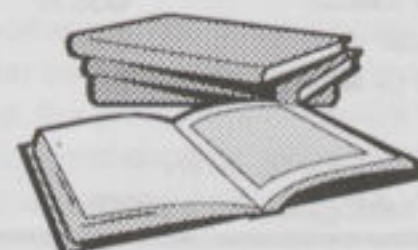
Sexuality in reality is much more complex than our one-word definitions allow. We are so used to oversimplifying sexuality into straight and gay that people have a difficult time allowing for new words and definitions. As someone very involved in and a part of the lesbian community, people freak out when they hear the word "bisexual" because it forces them to challenge their (mis)assumptions. Like the word "lesbian," a bisexual label means something different to each person. The reality is that we need to give more information about ourselves than a one-word label in order to really understand each other. Many people my own age weren't a part of all of the discussions that went on in the seventies, but we have inherited the residues of all of the different debates of the past. This book helped me to understand where all of our ideas have come from and how many of them can be detrimental to the health of the movement.

The book not only talks about bisexuality and how it all fits in, but it also gives you an extremely good general overview of the development of the lesbian movement, breaking down the issues concisely and explaining all of the various and messy forms of lesbian ideology from the seventies to the present. As someone who reads everything I can find on this topic, this book has the most concise history of lesbian ideology I've ever found.

Finally, Rust argues that bisexuality gives us the opportunity to reevaluate our own definitions and ideologies, and to resolve some of these internal landmines in order to move toward a more inclusive sexual liberation movement which is about liberation for *everybody* and which doesn't trip on its own contradictions. To do this, bisexuality has to live up to its own promises by knocking apart all of our little subcategories, pushing us to move beyond them. She ends the book by saying "...will it keep sight of its current goals and remain a movement for sexual self-determination and liberation? If it does, it might prove to be the final revolution on the wheel of sexual identity politics." (p. 259)

Bisexuality and the Challenge to Lesbian Existence is available in paperback for \$17.95 and has been sighted in local bookstores. I give it four stars and two thumbs up.

[Meghan Foley is an art student living in Jamaica Plain. She was a student in Robyn Ochs' bisexuality seminar at Tufts University last fall, and attended the Bi Conference in Boston last spring.]



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and what you like
then do that.

Ask her
what she wants
then please her.

Imagine the most delicate
caress you have ever known
and give it to her
everywhere, slowly.

Speak her name
into the openings
of her body
and listen
to her answer.

Remember
the fierceness and power
of all our great grandmothers
who rode horses
and plowed fields
and bore children
in anguish
and share that with her.

Love her in daylight
Treasure what you learn.

by Jennie Orvino (1975)

Invisible Lives from page 1

was aware that "Carrie" identified as bisexual. No, she responded, I just assumed she was a lesbian. It's important to note that neither "Alice" nor "Carrie" ever misrepresented herself. Rather, each made an incorrect assumption about the other because there was no conflict present to make each woman's bisexuality visible to the other.

I'll be moderating a panel at the Outwrite Conference, which will be held here in Boston at the Park Plaza hotel during the last weekend in February. The panel will be called "When Bisexuals Have Lives" and will feature prominent novelists who have written stories with bisexual characters. For more information about the Outwrite Conference, call (617) 426-4469.

A Letter From Maine

Dear BiWomen,

Some friends and I would like to attend some of the events - brunches, etc. We are a bit isolated up here. The Maine Bisexual People's Network has been inactive for a while. It has been several years since the Matlovich Society has done a presentation for bisexuals.

If BBWN or Biversity has speakers who would like to give a presentation in Portland next year, it would be a good Matlovich program. I'd volunteer to sell buttons and T-Shirts. Many of us in the Lesbian/Gay/Bi community have been working to defeat referendum Question #1. Now that it's defeated, we have to catch up on everything else! So I don't want to commit myself to any extra work. But during the coming year, there may be times when I can contribute something to BBWN. A bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is coming up before the legislature - and next year are elections when an openly lesbian State Senator is running in the primaries for the U.S. House (she's great!). There's going to be a lot of grassroots activism going on next year.

I do set aside time during good weather to ride my motorcycle. I liked seeing the article about the group Moving Violations. Do they ever ride up here?

I really enjoy the newsletter.

Ruth

Thanks to all Maine activists who helped defeat Question #1 and good luck with upcoming political battles! If there's any Moving Violations members who ride in Maine, write to BBWN and we'd be happy to forward your letter to Ruth.

cont'd from prev. page
and a columnist for "Out" Magazine. His talk, at 1 PM, is free and open to the public.

Cost of the conference is \$50, which includes all events and three meals. For registration info, call Patrick Beaudry at (508) 754-1292 or write BiLaGa c/o Patrick Beaudry/Clark University/950 Main Street - Box 183/Worcester, MA 01610. For Hotel info, call the Crown Plaza at 1-800-628-4240 or Clarion Suites Hotel at (508) 753-3512.

Other Upcoming Bi Conferences:

BECAUSE '96 Midwest bi conference. April 26 - 28 in Minneapolis, MN. Info: (612) 813-1383.

4th International Bi-sexual Conference, May 24 - 27 in Berlin. Info: gerhard@netmbx.netmbx.de or call 011-49-30-6944651.

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Lambda Rising in Cyberspace

Lambda Rising Bookstore opened an online bookstore on America Online this past June. Books, music, videos, and gift items are all available, including descriptions and full color images. Browsers can send messages to Lambda Rising's online staff or other shoppers, or sit in on a variety of author or performer conferences.

With over 1,000 people visiting the store each day, the on-line bookstore has been a huge success, as well as increasing convenience and allowing people who would not otherwise have access to a gay and lesbian bookstore to obtain materials and information.

If you subscribe to America Online, type "GAYBOOKS" at the log on screen. If you're interested in trying it (and have a computer and modem), call Lambda Rising at 1-800-621-6969 for a free software packet that includes ten free online hours.

Book Review: *Some Girls*

by Kristin McCloy

Reviewed by Rachel Silber

Kristin McCloy's *Some Girls* is a book that has much to offer. First of all, the author has a gift for evoking a sense of place. Most notably in *Some Girls*, the gritty sensory overload of New York City is almost tangible, but McCloy does just as good a job with a serene blue and white beach in Mexico or in infinite blackness of the desert at night.

Nevertheless, the characters in *Some Girls* dominate the book, particularly Claire, a young woman on her own in New York City for the first time, and Jade, the mysterious, secretive woman that Claire is drawn to. McCloy captures how it feels to fall in love with a person who really is "other," not the person you ever anticipated loving or one whose experiences mirror your own. Jade pulls Claire along first as a guide and friend, then as a lover. But Claire is not simply the less sophisticated being educated by the more worldly; she pulls Jade into a different course as well.

Claire's boyfriend before her arrival in New York, Tommy, is a character who could have been sketched one-dimensionally, but his pain and confusion in dealing with Claire's changing life is handled respectfully and honestly. Minor characters are well sketched as individuals. Without any authorial haranguing about sexual politics, Claire's sexuality is not reduced to a labeled identity.

Claire and Jade are erotic but not sappy; romantic but never predictable. They are not the girls next door, but nevertheless are deeply believable and honestly characterized. Kristin McCloy's energetic dialog and natural handling of the erotic elements of Claire and Jade's story make a delightful book.

While the central premise of *Some Girls* is similar to the movie *When Night is Falling*, the novel covers more challenging territory as each heroine must step onto new and challenging ground to embrace the other in the end.

Movie Review: *When Night is Falling*

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

Patricia Rozema's new film, "When Night is Falling," tell the love stories of Martin, Camille, and Petra in an enchanting and sometimes surreal manner. Similar to the Canadian director's first feature film in 1987, "I've Heard the Mermaids Singing," "When Night is Falling" takes you into a world where mythic imagination continually shapes your view of reality.

Martin (Henry Czerny) and Camille (Pascale Bussieres) are romantically involved and both teach at the New College of Faith, whose president has high hopes for the pair to share the couple's chaplaincy. The only hurdle the couple must surmount to attain the position is that they must marry, a proposition Martin wants to accept but Camille is much more hesitant about.

Camille's ambivalence increases after her dog dies (or so it appears), and, when overcome with grief in the laundromat, receives help from a stranger. The stranger, Petra (Rachael Crawford), is quite taken by Camille and purposefully switches clothing in their laundry bags to ensure another meeting. Soon Camille enters the circus world where Petra is a performer and where the spark of their attraction for each other is evident, though not yet acknowledged by Camille.

Martin (Luther?) and the church pressure Camille to stay on the straight path (in more ways than one). But as she experiences and finally accepts loving passion toward Petra, she knows she cannot be part of a church that would condemn those feelings. The repressed violence of the church is present in each scene in which the college president appears, and it finally erupts when Martin discovers Camille is involved with Petra. But by that point, neither the church nor Martin can claim Camille as their own any longer.

Camille's struggle with leaving Martin and acceptance of her feelings for Petra are common conflicts within many bisexual and lesbian women's lives. Rozema aptly uses the metaphor of hang-gliding to show Petra's effect upon Camille. Petra offers her faith of a different kind and the

Night continues on page 4

BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

Psychotherapy and Consultation

2326B MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02140
617.497.6581

Minutes from page 2

we really do need you), several outlets were discussed. A free "Call for Submissions" ad will be placed in *Sojourner* and a small paid ad will be put in the edition of *Gay Community News* that is distributed at the annual Outwrite Conference. Exchange ads with other publications were also discussed. (If you belong to an organization that would like to do an ad exchange, please contact us.)

The treasurer's report confirmed that revenues are fine for the time being but we need to think ahead for a fund-raiser at some point this year. Printing costs are a large expense.

Several changes were suggested to the newsletter committee structure. We will be replacing the volunteer night with an editorial meeting to meet with anyone interested in helping out, in planning the content and structure of the issues, and assisting with production. The themes for the next two newsletters were also discussed and chosen in advance: An issue dealing with family for April/May and an issue on women of color for June/July. Ananda will be a guest editor for the women of color issue.

Meeting minutes as of this writing will be briefer and will focus on decisions and issues to be presented again in the future.

A discussion of office coverage didn't yield any concrete dates or times, although combining it with an Open House at the office as a prelude to a social event was discussed. More coordination with Biversity is needed.

Debbie reported briefly on the Freedom to Marry Coalition meeting she attended. A vote to adopt the Freedom to Marry Resolution and join the coalition as a full member was tabled until next meeting due to lack of time.

A women's coming-out group is in the works — more details will be available later this spring.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 21st at 7:00 P.M. All women welcome. Please join us!

submitted by Debbie Block-Schwenk



Out's Doors a Little More Open This Year

by Robyn Ochs

The December/January 1996 issue of *Out* featured "The Out 100 of 1996," a list of "the most admirable, loud and infamous gay, lesbian and omnisexual achievers of the past year." It seems that being a 6 on the Kinsey Scale (or at least being presented as one) is no longer a requirement for recognition, at least by this "lesbian and gay" magazine. A handful of deviant deviants made the list this year:

"Marjorie Garber (author), a Harvard professor of English, went pop with the new bible of bisexuality, *Vice Versa* (Simon & Schuster), a massive study of desire in the middle octave."

"David Geffen (entertainment mogul) announced that the David Geffen Foundation would contribute \$4 million to New York-based AIDS service organizations Gods Love We Deliver and Gays Men's Health Crisis — the largest single donation in the history of the epidemic. In his spare time, Geffen started DreamWorks with Steven Spielberg and Jeffrey Katzenberg."

"Sophie B. Hawkins (musician) shed the one-hit wonder label three years after 'Damn I Wish I Was Your Love,' when her 'As I Lay Me Down' broke into the Top 10 this fall and pulled her 1995 album, *Whaler*, onto the Billboard chart for the first time. Meanwhile, stories in *Out* and *Details* launched Hawkins' effort to position herself as an omnisexual."

"Michael Stipe (musician) had quite a year: R.E.M.'s 12th album, *Monster*, went quadruple platinum, its tour sold out arenas. Stipe became a film producer with his Single Cell Pictures deal at New Line — and he had hernia surgery. Further, he finally addressed his sexuality head-on in the press without embracing the label gay or bisexual: 'I still maintain that it's nobody's business' he told *Out* in last month's cover story."

In addition, transgendered folks such as writer and activist Leslie Feinberg, singer and model RuPaul, and model and actress Tula made the list.

Keep Track of the Religious Right

People for the American Way has published *Hostile Climate 1995: A State by State Report on Anti-Gay Activity*. This book can be obtained for \$10.95.

Other publications on the religious right, censorship and other topics are also available. Contact People for the American Way, 2000 M Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036. Phone: (202) 467-4999. E-mail: pfaw@pfaw.org.



"Remember Them With Your Vote Campaign"

The NAMES Project Foundation and AIDS Action Council are joining forces in 1996 in a national campaign to get out the vote on AIDS. The campaign combines voter education and registration efforts with displays of the AIDS Memorial Quilt in congressional districts around the country. One of the stops will be Springfield, Massachusetts. For more information, contact Greg Lugliani or Scott Williams at (415) 882-5500 or Beth Jones at (202) 986-1300 x 3050.

THE CASUAL CUP

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Friday: 8 am-1 am
Saturday: 8:30 am-1 am
Sunday: 9 am-11 pm

Call for Submissions:

"Change the Politics: Women Make the Difference" is the sixth annual Women's Studies conference at Southern Connecticut University in New Haven and will be held on October 5-6, 1996. Proposals for workshops, roundtable discussions, paper presentations, performances and other presentations focusing on both political issues and practical strategies for organizing for change are being actively sought. Sessions are one hour and fifteen minutes in length. As this is a self-supporting conference, presenters are expected to pay the conference registration fees (some financial assistance may be available). Deadline for 250-500 word proposals is June 1, 1996. In conjunction, the fourth annual Women's Fair will be held on the same weekend, featuring women-owned business and advocacy groups. For information, call the Women's Studies Program at (203) 392-6747 or (203) 392-6133. Submissions can be mailed to Women's Studies, EN 271, Southern CT State U., 501 Crescent St. New Haven, CT. 06515.

Bay Windows from page 5

they're dead. O.K., Sandra Bernhard and Maria Maggenti. Nah, they're "stahs." Better still, I'll sit with my current and future friends who are quite a mix or citizen and artist, straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual and whatever, people who are humanists at the core and who enjoy underdog coalition politics, especially at the grassroots level. I say I'm bisexual for simple truth-in-advertising. Some lesbians don't want to know me because I still love men; some men can't deal with an uppity class-conscious lesbian-feminist who has enjoyed the equality of power in lesbian relationships. It's only fair to warn them up front.

But he's right about the white middle class identity politics slant of the *Newsweek* article. Hey, what can you do in a few pages of sexy soundbites? Consider the source. For a fairer treatment of bisexuality in life and literature, see *The New Yorker* of July 17 for Edmund White's review of Marge Garber's *Vice Versa*. It might surprise you.

Politically, as long as "are you now or have you ever been?" is lurking again, and as long as the Armed Forces and Jesse Helms say I'm queer, what choice do I have but to be a gay activist? And so I am. An army of ex-s cannot lose.

Marcia Diehl

A Very Small Table*

Bruce Bawer, the author of *A Place at the Table*, "appears to have a very small table, and very few chairs around it. I was saddened to read his guest opinion, "Bisexuality and Confusion." Being the former, and not the latter, I am tired of having my identity invalidated, of being told that my bisexuality confuses mainstream society and therefore harms the gay movement.

One of my favorite buttons says, "I act this way to piss you off." But, on the contrary, I do not call myself bisexual to piss Bruce Bawer (or anyone else) off. I call myself bisexual because that is the truest label I can locate to describe my reality. I

have identified as bisexual for 20 years now. I am proud and out and fully committed to my community, which includes lesbians and gay men, as well as bisexuals and (gasp!) even some heterosexuals.

I do not define myself as bisexual apolitically, or to merely say (as Bawer accuses) that "this is what I feel like doing this week." Rather, it means that if and when I do fall in love, it could be with a man or a woman. Period. I do not call myself bisexual to be trendy; despite the recent media frenzy over bisexuality, I do not find that people think I am cool when I identify as bisexual. Rather, I more often encounter stereotyping such as that perpetrated by Bawer.

I don't know whether Bawer has noticed, but there has been a media frenzy about *all of us* in the past few years. It seems that almost every day the *Boston Globe* has a gay story. And I think that's great. We need to be visible. Think back to ten years ago when stories about lesbigay people were few and far between and we *never* appeared on television. I can't control the quality (or lack thereof) of media coverage of people who identify like myself. But I must confess that it feels good to see that "b" word in print and on television, even when I don't fully agree with the way we're being represented.

We have nothing to gain by internal fighting. We have much to gain by supporting each other and working together in coalition. I am not your enemy.

Finally, I say to Bawer: I can and do face who I really am. It is you who can't seem to face who I really am. This is my reality. Get used to it. Treat me with the same respect you ask for yourself.

Robyn Ochs

*Titles are from *Bay Windows* Editorial Pages, September 28, 1995





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SUBSCRIBE TO BIWOMEN!

Support the Boston Bisexual Women's Network and keep the newsletter alive!

Fill out the form on the next page or send us a note with your ideas to

BBWN
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

February 27 ♦ Tuesday

Bisexual Resource Center Annual Meeting. 7-9pm. The Bisexual Resource Center is vitally important to the health and well-being of the Boston bisexual community. Please attend to elect officers and new board members and help strengthen the BRC by getting involved!

March 1 ♦ Friday

BiWomen submissions deadline. This issue's theme is Families, so let us know about your situation with your family of origin, your chosen family, your thoughts on "family values", or whatever family means to you. Submissions on all subjects welcome. Send calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, book or movie reviews to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

March 3 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. 7-9pm. (see February 4th)

March 5 ♦ Tuesday

Ice Cream and Change Fundraiser, 7:00pm at Robyn's in Central Square, Cambridge. Bring your jars of loose change and enjoy some ice cream as we wrap coins to help support the bi office. Call Robyn at (617)495-8476 or email ochs@world.std.com for directions.

March 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9pm. (see February 7th).

March 9 ♦ Saturday

BBWN potluck brunch at 12 pm in Brookline near Coolidge Corner. Please join us for fine food and conversation. Call Katherine at 738-5383 for directions.

Biversity Matinee. 1pm. Meet at Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square to nosh and select a movie to see. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

March 10 ♦ Sunday

Bisexual Women of Color Gathering. 3 - 6 p.m. A chance to tell our stories, connect, and celebrate who we are. Free. Call Ananda at (617) 776-1008 for location and info.

Subscription Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (optional) _____

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Subscription Rate (Sliding Scale):

___\$0-\$20 (pay what you can)

___\$20-\$30 (suggested)

___\$30-\$100

March 13 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9 pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

March 16 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch. 11am. Vegetarian food at Buddha's Delight in Boston's Chinatown. On Beach Street between Harrison and Washington. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line.

March 19 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9pm. (see February 7th)

March 20 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Open to anyone interested in the operations of the Bisexual Resource Center.

March 23 ♦ Friday

Biversity Club Night, 9:30pm. at Quest, 1270 Boylston St., Boston (no cover before 10pm). Closest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

March 24 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Bowling. 2pm Meet at Games & Lanes, Route 2 in Arlington near the Alewife T stop on the Red Line.

March 26 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Getting the newsletter out requires a lot of active hands! The more the better. And it's a great chance to connect with lots of cool women. 7-9 pm at the Bi Office.

March 31 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch. 1:30. Ethiopian food at Addis Red Sea, 544 Tremont Street, Boston. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

April 10 - May 15 ♦ Wednesdays

Coming Out Group for Women. Wednesdays, 7-9pm at the Bi Office. BBWN is organizing this six week support group for women who are getting started on the process of exploring their bisexuality and coming out as bisexual. For info call Ann at (617) 923-8716.

April 19 ♦ Friday

Queers of Color Coming Together. Columbus, Ohio. Info: (614)486-5664.

Volunteers Needed

The Bisexual Resource Center needs volunteers who are willing to donate one evening or afternoon per month to help make the center work better. The tasks are easy. Things like answering phone calls, filing new arrivals into the archives, updating the bulletin board, transcribing phone messages, and mailing information to people who have requested it. If you can help, call the center at (617)424-9595 and leave a meszage for Liam.



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The Bi Office has moved!

The Bisexual Resource Center is now at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. Our new phone # is (617) 424-9595.

Ongoing Events

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

L/G/B Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals.

Concert band, no auditions. 7:00-9:00pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 825-2333.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm, Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

January 30 - February 20

Art-n-Coffee. BBWN's own "All Bi, Myself" artist Katherine Douthit will have paintings shown at The Casual Cup, Brookline's new woman-owned, bi-owned cafe. 1362 Beacon Street, near the Coolidge Corner stop on the C branch of the Green Line T.

February 2 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse. 8 pm Come and hang out with other bi folk at the Boston area's first bi coffeehouse, The Casual Cup, 1362 Beacon Street, Brookline. See directions above.

February 4 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. Bispac takes place 7-9 pm on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

February 7 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9 pm at the Bi Office. Small donation requested (not required!) to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center.

February 10 ♦ Friday

BBWN Skating on the Boston Commons. 7 pm. Meet above ground at Park Street Station area. Call Julie at 731-2307 if you plan to attend.

February 10 ♦ Saturday

Valentine's Ballroom Dance. 8 - 11:30 pm A chance to dance! Co-sponsored by Biversity and Swingtime at the Ballet Etc. studio at 185 Corey Rd. in Brookline, near the B or C branch of the Green Line T. No experience or partner necessary. Smoke/alcohol free. Swing and ballroom dance lesson from 8-9pm. \$6-\$10 (sliding scale) admission includes lesson, refreshments, and parking. For work exchange and info contact Jonathan at (617)648-6884 or urbach@fas.harvard.edu.

BIVERSITY is the Boston-area mixed-gender, multi-cultural bisexual network. For more info, call the Bi Office at (617) 424-9595.

February 10 - 11 ♦ Saturday - Sunday

Southern California Bi Conference in Long Beach, CA. Info: 1-800-585-9368 or fturner@netcom.com.

February 16 ♦ Friday

Biversity Club Night. 9:30pm. Boogie on down to Manray, Cambridge's hottest gay bar. 21 Brookline St., Central Square. Nearest T stop is Central on the Red Line.

February 17 ♦ Saturday

BBWN potluck brunch at 12 pm hosted by Kate and Lisa in Jamaica Plain. Call Kate at 522-8085 for directions. Come enjoy the company of other women and eat to your heart's content.

Biversity Brunch. 11 am at Grecian Yearning, 174 Harvard Ave. in Brighton. Take the B branch of the Green Line to the corner of Commonwealth and Harvard near Pizzeria Uno.

February 20 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 pm (see February 7th)

February 21 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Planning Meeting. 7-9pm. at the Bi Office. Come help make BBWN the best it can be! Come share your ideas on what BBWN should be doing and help plan activities for the coming months. All women welcome.

February 22 ♦ Thursday

BBWN Coffee at the Casual Cup. 8 pm. It's a slow night for this new bi-owned coffee-house in Coolidge Corner, so let's liven it up with conversation and our proud bi presence! 1362 Beacon St., Brookline.

February 23 - 25 ♦ Friday - Sunday

OutWrite Conference '96. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender writers from around the world will discuss and share their work. At the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. Info: (617)262-6969.

New England Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Student Leadership Conference at Clark University in Worcester, MA. \$50 fee includes three meals. Info: Call Patrick Beaudry at (508)754-1292 or email eberendes@vax.clarku.edu.

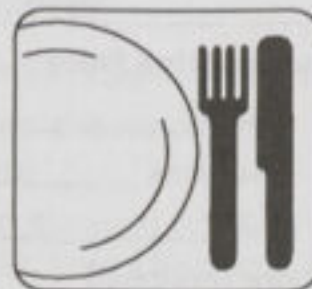
February 24 ♦ Saturday

BBWN discussion and dessert. 3-5pm at Lynn's in Newton Center. Lynn will moderate a discussion for her Master's thesis on expanding notions of women's bodies and sexuality. We'll talk about pleasure, desire, feminism and much more. Sweets provided. Space is limited. Call Lynn at 965-5564 to sign up. All women welcome. T accessible.

February 25 ♦

Sunday

Biversity Brunch. 1:30 pm. at Mimi's, 950 Massachusetts Ave. in Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Central on the Red Line.



Coro Allegro, the B/L/G and friends classical chorus, will perform at 3 pm at the Church of the Covenant on Newbury St. Call Julie at 731-2307 for tickets and info.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Bi Women

April/May 1996

Vol. 14 No. 2

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

Coming Out? Piece of Cake! (A Forty-four Year Old Cake)

by Marcia Deihl

I write my parents a letter, usually on Fridays, and they write me, one to a side, on typewriter paper, usually on Mondays. For years, it was immediately clear whose side was whose. Dad was mostly right brain feelings: fantasies, memories, some plans. Mother's side was what birds have appeared at her feeder, and family illnesses and gossip. Both of them sent surreal comics from the paper, often the same ones I have just sent them. They both wrote about what Great Books they were reading, often with some theological or feminist comment thrown in. Mother was always getting in trouble for speaking her mind at her Friday night salon. Lancaster is not Cambridge; they often had conservative friends from church, and apparently the discussion could get rather dicey.

Two years back, one of Dad's recent letters read, "Dearest Marcia: It must have been hard for you to write and send copy that confirms your coming out to your parents. I'm glad you did. It changes but can never change our love for you. Dad."

What!? 'Come out?' Hadn't I already come out to them years ago?

They are nearing eighty, so...maybe they forgot?? Yeah, sure. I had been sending them my published articles for years. Articles with titles like "Biphobia" and "Moving Beyond Binary Thinking" in recently published books and journals. Articles about how I had co-founded the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. Letters full of my work with the Cambridge Lavender Alliance and my recent baptism by fire on the successful campaign for the first out lesbian to run for Cambridge City Council. Of course, Dad had been a staunch civil rights advocate—that's partially why he had been "let go" from his parish in the early seventies—but he wasn't Black. Therefore, Marcia didn't necessarily have to be gay. Well, I guess they were half right.

The week before, high on the upsurge of my writer's narcissistic mania I had sent them a draft of my Cambridge memoirs, waiting for their usual rave reviews. It was set in the 1970's, including the

Coming Out continues on page 5

"A family: Two or more persons who share resources, share responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. The family is that climate one comes home to; and it is that network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, legalities, or adoption or marriage." --American Home Economics Association

What is a Family?

by [REDACTED]

I'd like to share thoughts on family that come from two different ceremonies I had with partners: one a "non-commitment ceremony" with a woman and the other a legal wedding with a man. Both joyous and important events in my life. Both gatherings of "family".

Eight years ago my woman lover and I invited our "family of friends" to gather with us in celebration of our relationship. We chose not to invite our families of origin because we knew they would not be able to really rejoice and celebrate in the way we would want people to do with us.

A reading we used (one that is still a permanent installed on my refrigerator door) came from an unlikely source: The American Home Economics Association. It defines family as follows:

Family continues on page 4

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Plus see page 2 for info on the next issue!!

Volunteers of the Month



Robyn Ochs
Lynn Rosenbaum
Ellyn Ruthstrom
Rosalee
Margie
Claire M.
Ann Gaglia
Deborah Levine
Maryellen
Rachel
Fennel

And many more
wonderful women!
You know who
you are! Thank
you, thank you,
thank you!

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this
issue of BiWomen:

Linda Blair

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Writing and Artwork Wanted for *BiWomen* Women of Color Issue

The theme for the June/July issue:

Women of Color
with [REDACTED]
as guest editor

DEADLINE for the June/July issue:

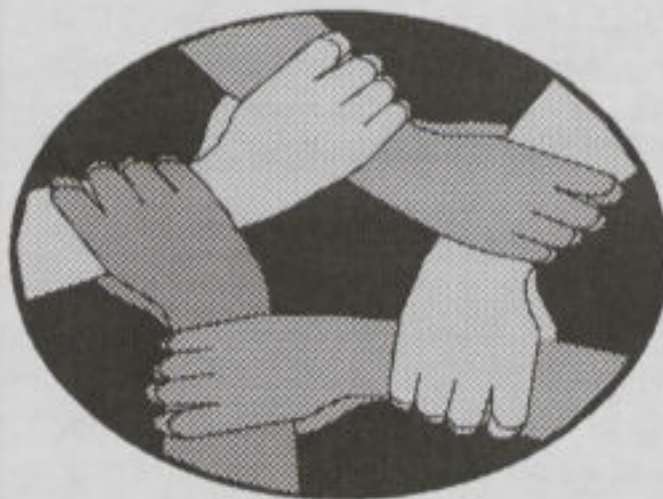
Friday, May 3rd

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (DOS or Mac), and include a name or phone number if possible.

If you do **not** want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute **anonymously**, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140



The next issue of *BiWomen* will focus on women of color. This is a chance for us to see our voices side by side rather than isolated.

All women of color are invited to send in your writing or artwork to this issue. Even if you don't think of yourself as a writer, or don't know if you have something right for *BiWomen*, please join us.

If you need ideas for the topics, here are a few: your experiences in the women of color community, your favorite book by a woman of color, stories about women or men whom you have loved, your health and sexuality, work and survival, or family and childhood.

Another way to find a topic: What are the challenges in life that you are the most concerned with right now, and that you most want to express?

Have you written something in your work or in school that may be interesting to *BiWomen* readers?

Please contribute something to this special issue about us. Even if it is just one short paragraph, it will be welcome.

If you think you might want to write something but need encouragement, call [REDACTED] and I'll help!

Send in your poetry, personal experiences, short stories, opinions, essays, photography, song lyrics, articles, book reviews, plays, and artwork, and help create a collective vision that will allow us to see who we are.

Warmly,

[REDACTED]
Guest Editor

Want to be informed of bi events and informal get togethers?

Tired of knowing *BiWomen* only through pieces of paper?

BBWN is forming a phone list !!!

The list will be restricted to use by the BBWN Steering Committee and will be used to remind you of upcoming events and events that didn't make it into the newsletter calendar. (We may also occasionally call to see if you are interested in volunteering for any activities -hosting a brunch, helping with fundraising, etc.).

To sign up for the phone list, give us a call at (617) 424-9595 and leave a message indicating that you want to be included in the list.

Summary Minutes: BBWN Meeting February 21, 1996

Attendees: Ann, Rosalie, Ellyn, Ananda, Debbie, Kate, Megan, Carla

Ananda volunteered to facilitate and started the meeting out with a check-in, asking each person to talk about what they get out of BBWN and assess how we have been doing since we started the bimonthly organizing meetings.

The group decided to gather a phone list of current active members, semi-active members and active wannabes to use as a communications tool for all events.

There was a major discussion about the Cambridge Women's Center Bi Rap group that meets on Tuesday nights, or rather, that is supposed to meet but has not been well attended for a while and the Women's Center has decided to cancel the group. We agreed to talk to the Women's Center and see if anything can be done to keep the group going, even if it was reduced to only once or twice a month. Several present at the meeting volunteered to facilitate future Bi Raps.

The organizers of the six-week Bisexual Women's Coming Out group that BBWN is sponsoring requested that their expenses be approved by the steering committee. An estimated figure of \$250 was given by the organizers to cover room rental, publicity, and light refreshments. Participants in the group will be asked for donations towards these expenses, but it is not a money making enterprise. All approved of covering the expenses and the organizers were asked to report back to the group.

What will BBWN do for Pride Day this year? A pseudo-subcommittee was hastily put together (it is not a closed group so feel free to add your two cents) and a meeting will take place in March to come up with ideas to bring to the next Organizing Committee meeting.

The group discussed the endorsement of a Same-Gender Marriage Proposal and all agreed we should endorse it, with the stipulation that the language not define the relationships as "gay or lesbian" but as "same-gender."

The next meeting is Tuesday, April 9 at 7:00 p.m. All women welcome. Join us!

Submitted by the rarely submissive Ellyn Ruthstrom

All articles and art appearing in this newsletter are copyrighted by the authors and artists.

Bisexual Resource Center Annual Meeting

by Linda Blair

Old and new activists alike turned out for the Bisexual Resource Center's 1996 Annual Meeting on February 27. Electing members and officers to the Board of Directors was top on the evenings' agenda and went quickly with several members of the local bi community enthusiastically stepping forward to help guide the work of the BRC by joining the Board. New Board members include Liam Moody, Jennifer Fay, and Jonathan Urbach, who was also elected as Secretary. Linda Blair, who has been on the Board for two years, was elected as Board President and Michael Leibensperger, who joined the Board last spring, was reelected as Treasurer. Jay Sekora was reelected for his third year and Wayne Bryant returned to the Board following a one-year absence to focus on writing a book due out later this year.

In addition to joining the Board, Liam accepted the position of Volunteer Coordinator for the BRC. He will be working to establish regular office hours and to standardize office procedures for answering phones and letters, updating and distributing pamphlets, and a host of other activities. He has already done a great job getting the new office up and running.

Bisexual Resource Guide editor Robyn Ochs reported that the 1996 Guide is well under way. The new guide will be significantly bigger and have a more impressive look to it than last year's edition, which has sold over 800 copies. Robyn was also pleased to announce that the 1995 Guide has made a net profit for the BRC for the first year since the organization began publishing it. She is currently looking for volunteers to help investigate distributors and printers.

Several others in attendance volunteered to take on projects that were proposed at the meeting, such as designing a home page on the World Wide Web for the BRC and surveying other organizations about their training procedures for volunteers who staff information and referral phone lines.

BRC continues on page 9

"Gay and Bisexual Married Men's Group"

This support group meets the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at a Boston location. Confidentiality is assured, and every one may be as open as he feels comfortable with. The name is interpreted loosely: some members are not currently married, while many are uncomfortable with the idea of labeling their sexual orientation. To get more information, call (617) 625-0330, or (617) 576-9747 for a recorded message.

Bi Positive Ad in Hawaii

We were happy to find a Bi-Positive AIDS Education Ad in the January issue of *Island Lifestyle*. The ad pictured a threesome and the title "Bi-Curious?"

The text read: *MYTH: Bisexuals spread AIDS in the heterosexual community. FACT: HIV is spread through unprotected sex or sharing needles with an infected person. It's not who you do...it's WHAT you do. HIV/AIDS. Separate myth from fact.*

The Ad was co-sponsored by the Hawaii State Dept. of Health and the Life Foundation, an AIDS Services Organization.

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New E-Mail List for Kids With G/L/B/T Parents

A new electronic mail list has been created for people of all ages who have lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender parent(s), foster parent(s) or other guardian(s). No parents will participate in the list unless they have gay parents themselves.

The list moderator intends it to be a forum to talk about "all the things we can't talk about anywhere else," including AIDS, teasing, gay and straight parents, and feelings. The list will also provide an opportunity for the kids of G/L/B/T parents to tell their own stories, ask questions, make friends and use their experience to help others.

To subscribe to the list, send e-mail to: majordomo@vector.casti.com and write in the body of the message (not the subject): subscribe
kidsofgays yourfirstname yourlastname
<yourlogin@host.domain>.

Kids may use their parent's email address, but parents are asked to

continues on next page

Who is Family??

by Katherine Douthit

When I fell on the ice in my first month at high school and my elbow wouldn't open or close, she appeared in brown curls and freckles at my bedroom door with a tin of cookies and she stayed the night — my new-found best friend. I hardly noticed my pain while we chattered and stayed together all night. By our junior year of high school she stayed *every* night, and I never sat up late, afraid or alone. We were riding and camping partners, truancy gangsters, dual divas. We were spoons, and though we never called each other sister, my parents considered her one of the family. We had boyfriends, and we advised one another on every topic. There was one awkward moment when "attraction" was almost addressed and quickly dismissed; we wouldn't think of sacrificing our love to something so foreign and unacceptable to the world we lived in. Still, I designed house plans for our future, in which the driftwood sign over the farm entrance bore *both* our names.

When she left our town I howled around like a kicked dog, suffering through every night. When I left home and got married, she visited my parents when she was in town, at the family dinner table showing photos of her husband and baby while I was 2000 miles away. She fitted the niche that the family had made for her, and love made her one of us and made all of us a part of her.

When time and distance allowed me the freedom to think more clearly, I asked myself how much a "part of the family" she would be if we lived together all grown up, a pair as devoted now as we had been in our old days together. I think my parents and siblings might get used to the idea — eventually. Is sex the line drawn between family and the outside? My three sisters' husbands might on many occasions answer yes to that question. They often groan about the nervous tension of trying to belong to our close-knit

Who? continues on page 9

Family from page 1

"A family: Two or more persons who share resources, share responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. The family is that climate one comes home to; and it is that network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, legalities, or adoption or marriage."

In the ceremony I had with my current male partner, we spoke of gathering not only with the families that we grew up in, but also our "family of the heart." This time, my family of origin did get invited, but still had great difficulty in celebrating with us. This was due to the fact that we insisted on using the "B" and "L" words in the ceremony. My heterosexual partner called for all heterosexuals to work for righting the injustice of same sex partners not being allowed to have their relationships legally recognized. My mother nearly memorized the cracks in the sidewalk at our outdoor ritual and left that evening without even saying goodnight.

It was really our family of the heart — people of all sexual orientations — who love and care about both of us that were able to celebrate and affirm us. My "family" felt shame at me speaking about who I am. My family of the heart love me all the more for it. One of the greatest joys was having my lesbian, gay and bi friends thank me for creating something that acknowledged them and their relationship as legitimate families.

We asked that rather than signing a traditional guest book, that people draw a picture or write something in a book about what family meant to them. A couple of the ones that touches us the most include the following:

"A family is those hearts that harmonize with yours."

A former woman lover who attended with her current girlfriend drew a wonderful picture which they signed "From our family to yours with love."

A bi male friend wrote "Let's say family is a verb, not a noun, and sometimes hard to recognize. But maybe, when you feel it, there it is! And you guys feel like family to me."

I am truly blessed with family in many forms, but particularly treasure my family of friends, my family of the heart.

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Coming Out from page 1

behind-the-scenes stories of my six-year women's band, the New Harmony Sisterhood. Nothing they hadn't seen before. . .

Ah, wait a minute, this time I'd included Kit's note from my "I'm Settled party". Kit's note had said that 1) she was hurt that I was "settled" without her, as if she had meant nothing in my life; and 2) she hoped that I had a good party and she wished me well. She had been my lover for two years. But how could they not have guessed that before?

Yes, I had cut out most of the sexy parts from their editions of my writings, not to mention confused them with boyfriends from then on. Then I remembered my lyrics and how coy they really were. "I'm Settled" was a vague "I'm OK" statement for all unmarried women. In the late 1970's, feminist pride was enough of an explanation. "No hubby, no house, no car, no kid/ And no regrets for what I didn't or I did..." No one questioned its glib self congratulatory tone, perhaps because they knew of another battered wife who was leaving her marriage or another happily single bohemian woman who was turning thirty.

What was different this time was my naming of who the "she" was, and that she was not just my friend. They had to know eventually and this was it. A test of their previous unconditional love—perhaps one of the hardest for a parent. They loved Kit and knew her well, but as my best friend. They even know she now lives with Janet and in what capacity. It must have been a little death for them, the death of the image of their

dear Little (hetero) Marcia. And I had gone and forced them to go back to their old images of my dear friend, their favorite, and reluctantly replay their video of our visits over the years, our van, the "Hiatus Party" the "Settled" party. Everything would take on an added cast, one that they didn't like.

I doubt they enjoyed this new X-rated inner video, but that was their video, not mine. My memories are not "dirty," and there's the rub. Many lesbian and gay and bisexual writers celebrate their passion and lust; for me it was more the cultural, emotional, and political keys that opened my beloved renegade mirror world. Keys that I still have today. If my parents think it was all about sex, I will live with that irony.

Dad says he is a self-avowed homophobe because once, in the Navy, some guy made a pass at him and he got all flummoxed. It made him sick, he said. At least he's honest.

"Dad," I said, "You can just say no. Like women have had to do through the ages And if he's bigger than you, hey, that's what us gals have always had to live with too."

"Hmmm..." he had said.

But he tries, for me. A few years ago he told me excitedly that he had invited a Homosexual to speak at their church men's breakfast. The man was "very nice," and had even stayed over with my parents. They sounded like he was the only gay man who had ever come to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. But I was happy and told him how proud of him I was. Then I found out that this

Coming Out continues on page 10

e-mail list cont'd

refrain from reading or contributing to the list. If you have questions, e-mail them to kidsofgays-owner@vector.casti.com.

The KidsOfGays list is sponsored by Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE), a broad-based support and advocacy organization run by and for daughters and sons of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents. For more info on COLAGE, e-mail

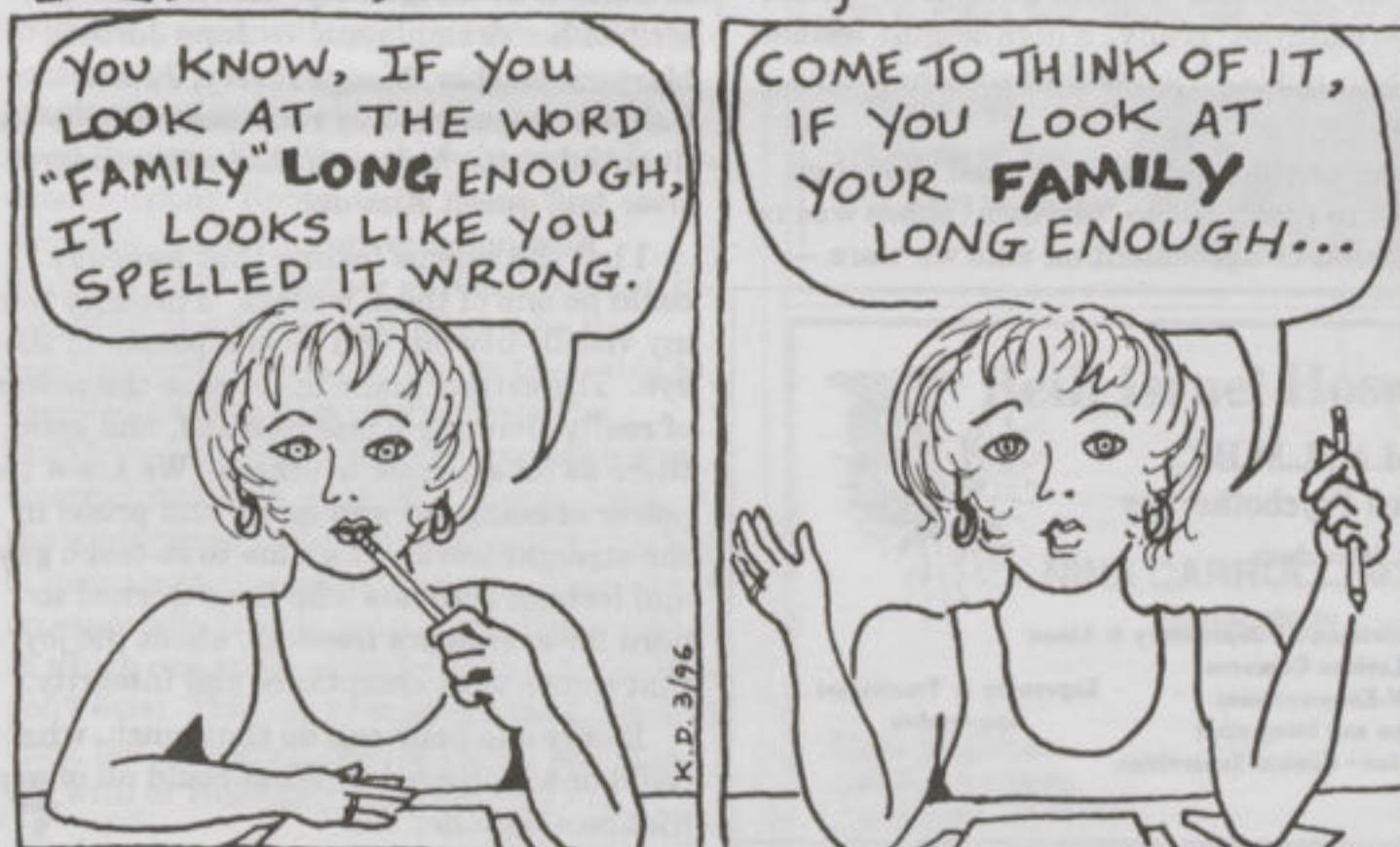
kidsofgays@aol.com, or write 2300 Market St. #165, San Francisco, CA 94114, call (415) 861-KIDS or fax (415) 255-8345.

• • • • •

Scholarship for Children of LesBigay Parents

The "Lee Dubin Memorial Scholarship Fund" awards scholarship money to deserving post-secondary students who have at least one lesbian, gay, or bisexual parent. The fund is co-sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International (GLPCI) and Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE). Applications are available by writing GLPCI at P.O. Box 50360, Washington, DC 20091; or fax 201-783-6204. For general information, write GLPCI or call (202) 583-8029. COLAGE can be contacted at COLAGE, 2300 Market Street, Box 165, San Francisco, CA 94114 or call (415) 861-KIDS.

ALL Bi, MYSELF by Kathrine Douthit



New Bi Book from Britain

Bisexual Horizons: Politics, Histories, Lives is a new, encyclopedic look at bisexuality. It offers a multicultural survey of bisexuality and the growing bisexual movement in Britain and around the world. The book is divided into four sections: Theory and Representation, which argues for flexibility in theories of sexual identity, Personal Stories, where bisexuals from many countries and backgrounds tell their stories and share their thoughts; HIV, AIDS and Safer Sex looks beyond a number of myths, and examines bisexual safer-sex practices; and Bisexual Politics documents the development of the bisexual movement and its relationship to other political groups. The book, edited by Sharon Rose, Cris Stevens, and the other members of the Off Pink Collective, a group of bisexual activists, is published by Lawrence and Wishart, London. To order the book (all payments be in British currency), send 12.99 British pounds plus 2 pounds postage (1 pound postage in the UK) to Off Pink Publishing, 24 Shandon Road, London SW4 9HR, England.

OUTWRITE 96



OutWrite 96, the 6th National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Writers Conference was held from February 23-26 in Boston. About 1300 queer writers and readers gathered, among them several members of BBWN. The comfort level for bisexuals and the amount of biphobia varied widely depending on the activity, but as the articles included here indicate, we have a way to go.

OutWrite is organized by the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, with an office at 29 Stanhope Street, right upstairs from the Bi Office. One great way to increase bi coverage is to increase our visibility and volunteer in the creation of OutWrite 97. If you enjoy interacting with activists and queer writers, give them a call at (617) 262-6969.

Bi at OUTWRITE

by Sandy Ryan

It was out of impulse that I attended the bisexual caucus at OutWrite. I'd spend most of Friday and Saturday at Park Plaza in high-femme mode, flirting with the gorgeous butch women and swallowing the unspoken code of the conference that didn't permit the "B" word.

As bisexual women, we are familiar with this frustration — the joy of coming out into the queer community, only to be faced with more, different silences. Like the silence we face in the straight world there is this unspoken understanding that there may be bisexual people among the lesbians and gay men but will we for goodness' sake keep our mouths shut. It's insidious and powerful, leading to a self-censorship. In the midst of all of the beautiful women, I began to wonder if I were maybe "really" a high-femme lesbian with four old boyfriends that somehow didn't "count."

Even as the publishers argued that they needed to reach out to "our own" there was no discussion or agreement on who we were —

OUTWRITE 96



only the old distinctions, gay/straight, liberal/conservative, us/them. Angry activists booed the straight people usurping gay people on the cover of the Advocate — so I kept my mouth shut about my old boyfriends. Curious. I never fail to mention that I'm a lover of women among straight people.

Nevertheless, I found the bisexual caucus, up on the third floor with the erotica writers, the fat women, the transgendered people — I'm not saying we were ghettoized. What I am saying is that I walked into that room with a tangible sense of release.

Some forty bisexual people were seated in a friendly circle — professionals, students, writers, all with a commonality of purpose and a sense of conviction. They were voicing the very sense of blurred identity and uncanny silence that I'd heard all weekend. Coming into that room was like flopping into a comfortable armchair.

I immediately noted the range of age among the caucusers. I'm twenty-four, and just beginning to meet people older than myself who identify as bisexual. "I'm still in this 'phase' after nineteen years," said one woman, and I wanted to applaud, hug her, and sit her down and listen to her stories. Another woman was only seventeen, yet spoke with great eloquence and sensitivity about gender, race, and class — as if she took these considerations for granted, rather than having to learn them later in life like a new language.

We spoke for only an hour on our concerns with the OutWrite conference — our desire to see a more fluid understanding of sexuality reflected in the conference panels, for someone to use the "B" word in the title of a panel, to claim it as an identity. Robyn Ochs described her dream panel — June Jordan, Marjorie Garber, Marge Piercy, James Baldwin (mysteriously returned to us) — influential writer/activists that are transgressive. And queer. And out.

I left the caucus feeling that someday I could be one of those writers. I proudly wore my visi-BI-lity pin and looked people in the eye. The caucus made me realize the power of really claiming a bisexual self, and being there as an example to others. We know the power of being out and queer and proud in the straight world. It's time to re-teach gay and lesbian activists who have worked so hard for everyone's freedom, about the joy that comes with acceptance and integrity.

If only one hour can do that much, what could one lifetime do? What could all of our lifetimes together do?

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OUTWRITE 96



Bi Caucus at OutWrite '96

By [REDACTED]

I was nervous and excited to arrive in Boston for OutWrite, the conference for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered authors. Activities started on Friday and ended on Sunday. I had never been to Boston before, never been to OutWrite. So I was surprised and glad to see that there would be an opportunity for a bisexual caucus on the first full day of activities. Although scheduled for only one hour, it turned out to be one of the highlights of the conference. As the room filled, I noticed several women who looked like teenagers. Teen authors who identify as bisexual: the world is an excellent place indeed. We started with introductions, and I noted the two Robins: Robyn Ochs from the Boston Bisexual Women's Network and Robin from Connecticut's Triangle Community Center. I saw people from Canada and a woman from Kansas, a state which will always hold a special place in my heart because I came out as bisexual while I lived there. There was also a woman who had never been in a roomful of bisexuals before and a teenager who had never been surrounded by a group of adult bisexuals. This is what we look like!

I was glad to see a number of men at the bi caucus. I have also seen that men account for about a third of the bisexuals at a bi discussion group I meet with in Connecticut as well. I say this because I have noted in various print sources, such as *The Advocate*, that men tend not to identify as bisexual as often as women do. I wonder if this is true, and why it would be?

The introductions took up about a third of the hour, and the next segment was devoted to sharing comments and feelings about the conference, from a bi point of view. For example, there was a glaring absence of the word "bisexual" in the schedule except for the caucus listing. Robyn Ochs noted that she would be holding a conversation with Marjorie Garber, author of *Vice Versa*, on bisexuality, but unless you knew who the women were you wouldn't have been able to figure out the subject matter from the OutWrite schedule. One young woman was disappointed with attitudes toward youth at the conference. Others mentioned the lack of bi inclusivity throughout various panels, with an especially hostile tone at the history panel in which one speaker claimed that bisexuals don't exist. This led to snickers from the audience, but was that because they were agreeing with or ridiculing the speaker?

OUTWRITE 96



There were positive stories as well. Robyn Ochs had a happy anecdote to share. I volunteered that I heard some speakers, such as activist/author Urvashi Vaid, use inclusive language. Also, I heard cartoonist Leanne Franson identify as bisexual. I encouraged people to speak out during sessions as I had, identifying as bisexual when I asked questions or made comments. Giving feedback works. I know this personally because of my experience writing letters to editors; both *Curve* and *Girlfriend* magazines had published my letters in their latest issues, and one was on the subject of bisexuality.

During the third segment of the caucus, we made plans for next year. There were suggestions for a bi/transgender caucus, a bi zine panel, and a panel on reclaiming literary figures as bisexual. A scholarship for youth and shared housing were mentioned as possibilities to make the conference more affordable. A photo was attempted at the end. I say attempted, because there seemed to be some technical difficulty leading to the spontaneous joke: how many bisexuals does it take to take a picture? Two!

In conclusion, I'll note that I was extremely pleased to see so many bisexuals, and authors at that! One problem was that I'm not sure a name and address list got through to many people. If we follow through on suggestions made that evening, though, OutWrite '97 will be more bi inclusive and the conference will be something I won't want to miss.

Bi Column in *Northwest Gay Times*

The *Northwest Gay Times*, a Washington State monthly newsletter (concentrating geographically on events from King County to the Canadian border), has recently added a new regular feature. "Bi the Way: a bisexual viewpoint" is written by Mert Eastman, and includes Mert's "Bisexual Myth of the Month." To check out this new feature and lend your support to their bi inclusivity, contact them at Northwest Gay Times/1500 A E. College Way #458/Mount Vernon, WA 98273/ phone: (360) 428-9217

Interested in joining a new social group? Whether you're out or first coming out, single or married, and would like to share interests, ideas or experiences.

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Bis Around The World

Bi Women Groups in Australia

The Australia Bisexual Network (ABN) mentioned several bi women's group forming or meeting throughout Australia in a recent issue of their magazine, *National Bi Ways*. In addition, ABN has produced a new pamphlet entitled "Women, Bisexuality, and Sexual Health." For info and referrals to local groups, contact the Australian Bisexual Network at ABN, P.O. Box 490 Lutwyche, Brisbane, Queensland Australia 4030 or call them at 61-7-3857-2500 evenings.



Hawaiian Readers:

A Bisexual Woman's Support Group meets the first Thursday of each month, 7:30-9 P.M. at the YWCA downstairs conference room. For info call Barbara, (808) 531-8282.



MOVIE REVIEW

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

Carrington: Another B-Girl Erased

(Warning: I will be discussing "the ending" of the movie because this is about Carrington's life, not a fictional character. You may not want to read this until after you have seen the film.)

Emma Thompson has gotten her share of attention recently in the queer press. She's talked extensively about living with her gay uncle and how comfortable she feels around gays and lesbians, even to the point of wishing that she would fall in love with a woman some day. Most of this press was linked to her promotion of the film "Carrington" which has a gay man as one of its main characters. Strangely absent, however, from both the film and the interviews, was any discussion of the lead character's bisexuality. The film *only* tells you about the men Carrington was involved with and she comes off as a raging heterosexual.

From Marge Garber's *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life* we know that the artist had at least one sexual relationship with a woman (Henrietta Bigham, the daughter of an American ambassador to England) in her very short life. (Carrington committed suicide at thirty-two, a few weeks after Strachey's death from cancer.) Garber quotes from a letter Carrington wrote to Strachey's sister-in-law: "I feel now regrets at being such a blasted fool in the past, to stifle so many lusts I had in my youth, for various females." And later, confiding to a male lover, "Probably if one were completely Sapphic it would be much easier. I wouldn't be interested in men at all, and wouldn't have these conflicts." Who among us has not heard similar statements in discussing coming to terms with bi attraction?

None of this was a part of the filmic story told about Carrington, and it seems a strange omission given the Bloomsbury propensity for bisexual living,

FILMS

since Strachey's homosexuality is explored freely. The Bloomsbury group of artists, writers, and academics was a space where multiple sexualities were accepted and it is a shame that the film seems unable to address that in the life of Carrington.

The bisexual invisibility is only one of the weaknesses of the film. Even though it is named after Dora Carrington, the focus is not on her but rather upon the long-term relationship between herself and the writer Lytton Strachey, a gay man. Unfortunately, the director (Christopher Hampton, who also wrote the screenplay) took an extremely unconventional woman and interpreted her life in a very conventional way: ie, a woman's life isn't important unless we know which men she was linked with. And the women she had significant relationships with, such as Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, and Lady Ottoline Morrell are barely acknowledged.

Carrington's artistic work is also given very little attention until several of her pieces are displayed alongside the credits at the end of the film. Carrington at one point says that her artwork is insignificant to her, but I think that statement was used to rationalize the filmmaker's own reluctance to see Carrington as a trained artist in her own right. While watching the credits, I was struck by the beauty of her work and it made me realize how little the film had revealed to me about this woman besides the men she had slept with, loved, or married. This prompted me to do some research about her and find samples of her artwork. If you are similarly inclined, let me suggest *Carrington: A Life* as an interesting biography which details the life of a talented and well-schooled artist and intellectual.

Even though I was disappointed once again that an opportunity to have a bisexual sensibility reach the silver screen was missed, I do think it was a positive step that a non-conventional sexual and emotional life of a woman was explored. Carrington deeply loved a gay man for over ten years and made him a permanent part of her family. She had a non-monogamous marriage and lived beyond the middle class norms of jealousy and possessiveness. These are not typically explored on film and I am glad that they are in this one. As a bi viewer, however, I am yet again frustrated when "one of us" is kept in the closet against her will.

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Sunday: 9 am-11 pm

Movie Review: *THE BIRD CAGE*



Reviewed by Katherine Douthit

It may not be billed as "a film for the whole family," but *The Bird Cage* (rated R), written by Elaine May and directed by Mike Nichols, is a brilliant celebration of family eccentricity, turmoil, support, and love. The opening credits roll with a raucous lip-synch performance of the hit song "We Are Family."

The film is a remake of Jean Poiret's *La Cage aux Folles*. It stars Robin Williams as Armand Goldman, the owner of the "Bird Cage," a nightclub in South Beach, Florida, and Nathan Lane as his flamboyant transvestite lover, Albert. Both Williams and Lane perform with great energy, hysterical wit, and sincere emotion. Gene Hackman's portrayal of a right-wing Republican senator is absolutely convincing and marvellously entertaining.

Once in a while, the lesbian community manages to dance into mainstream society with flying colors. The intelligent and sensitive writing, directing, and acting that make up *The Bird Cage*, this roaringly funny film, do our family proud.

Who? from page 4

family, in which they are the "in-laws." But they were officially made part of "our family," and a constant effort is made to accept their inclusion as perfectly natural.

What we mean by "family" has been extending itself for ages to embrace the adopted as well as the heirs. But now that I love a man and want to love a woman as well, will "family" take her in? Will there be a woman who sees *us* as her family? A family is a mosaic of its members, lovers, and relations struggling to make a united group and yet still nurture their individuality. Families are tempestuous testing grounds for relationships, new and old. They are never simple — my high school girlfriend is still like one of the family.

BRC from page 3

Finally, there was a lot of enthusiasm for Wayne's idea that the BRC host an International Bisexual Conference in Boston next year. Several ideas surfaced for locations at area universities and the Board agreed to hear a more complete proposal at its next meeting at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20. This meeting, to be held at the Boston Living Center at 29 Stanhope Street, Boston, is open to all bi and bi-friendly people. Anyone interested in getting involved in the BRC's work of providing information, resources and education on bisexuality and bisexual issues is encouraged to attend.

Book Review: *Exhibitionism for the Shy: Show Off, Dress Up, and Talk Hot* by Carol Queen



Reviewed by Fennel

In her very amusing & informative style, Carol Queen, a San Francisco-based sex positive sex educator, brings you on her journey from shyness to bold self-expression. The book is for anyone, but is directed toward a female reader.

Queen's book is not about advocating that women don trench coats and become flashers. Rather, she encourages exploring the vast continuum of exhibitionism, emphasizing fun and safety.

For instance, one appendix in the back is entitled "Dirty Words and Phrases"; here she lists body parts and phrases for having sex and suggests that the reader sort out for herself which words she finds appealing and which are turnoffs. Then, this could be discussed with a partner, so as to maximize an erotic scene, whether in "real sex", on the phone, or even on-line. Queen also discusses "dressing hot" (whatever that means for you), as the subtitle suggests.

It is a fun book and only a snapshot is captured here. I recommend it as a thought provoking and compelling "work." Also interesting to note is that Queen performed an "aural" piece about some of her experiences on the CD *Cyborgasm*, which is filmed in 3-D sound.

Call for Submissions:

Transgendered Manifesto: a Journey of Voices, Vision and Identity is looking to include articles, personal narratives, poetry, photographs, and art from transgendered men, including "ANYONE and EVERYONE who has a masculine gender expression or who identifies as male in whatever fashion....Hormones and surgery are NOT a prerequisite." Partners, significant others, parents, and supporters of transgendered men are also encouraged to contribute. Suggested length is 700-5,000 words. Deadline is April 30, 1996. For info, contact Michael Hernandez at lbear@crl.com or at P.O. Box 390288, Anza, CA 92539. Please send an SASE with all written inquiries and submissions.

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G/L/B Scholarship

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Thrift Store to Benefit AIDS ACTION

BOOMERANGS is a new resale shop with a bright, spacious and eclectic atmosphere designed to combine the great values found in thrift stores with a fun, visual environment that makes it easy to shop. Plus, all profits benefit the programs and services of the AIDS Action Committee! Designers have volunteered their time to make the environment at BOOMERANGS unlike that of any other thrift shop. Located at 60 Canal Street near North Station, BOOMERANGS is open Tuesday through Friday 10:00 AM to 6:30 PM, Saturday from 10 to 5 and Sunday from noon to five. For information about donations and volunteer opportunities, call (617) 450-1500.

Coming Out from page 5

man was from a group of ex-gays who go around saying they've been "cured" by Christian conversion, and they travel around speaking their message. What? All I could think of was the image of some guy hitting himself over the head. Ah, poor me, poor Dad, poor guy.

"It changes but can never change our love for you." What was he saying? I hoped he meant the flavor was changed, but not the amount. Or perhaps the amount, but not the existence. Knowing Dad's mind is close to my own, his oxymoronic love statement could hold many embryonic meanings. He's often so poetically cryptic that I can feel comfortable with any of my interpretations, and I think he would allow them.

Mother's note said that she'd figured it out from my bookshelves when she had visited me by herself ten years ago. I suppose it's about time that they both knew Chapter One of the story behind "I'm Settled." A few days after Dad's note arrived, their Christmas card was enclosed in the weekly letter, the year in review on a three-by-five postcard. Enclosed was a copy to forward to Kit, addressed "To you and yours." Do you see why I am in love with them?

Although I am now forty-six and they are in their early eighties, much as I try on the role of caretaker instead of Little Marcia, all it takes is a "Bless your heart!" from my mother when I'm feeling sick to make my shoulders drop in relief.

As for Dad, his letter said, in part, "What's this about my 'peaking' as a writer now that I have a column?" Did you mean to suggest that you will not? After all, your chances are better than mine. I'll buy the farm well before you or Dave, if my calculations are anywhere near correct." How could he have known how discouraged I'd been about my own writing that week? If humans could purr, a sort of affectional hard-on, that's what I would do when I read their letters.

These days, the "bifurcated root" in one of my bottom molars is a sad metaphor for my parents. Dad has Parkinson's and a touch of bipolar mental illness. Their double letters have stopped and the fault lines of their fifty years have started cracking. He's feeling a lifetime of resentment and she's getting the brunt of it. I am the grown-up now, and my sexuality is for me to enjoy and explore, but one of the greatest joys of my life is that I don't need to hide anything from them. I'm available for them, not for me.

The moral of the story? Things change. My twenties were for adventure, my thirties for reflection, and so far, my forties are for giving as joy, not as duty. Tears cleanse the soul, and I had to max out my emotional butch twenty-something self to get to my "femme" core, never pushing, always riding along.



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For more information and sample newsletter, write to:



Family Tree
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Somerville, MA 02144



CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

May 1 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Coming Out Group for Women. (see April 10th)

Coming Out as Bisexual. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center for people of all genders. 7-9 p.m. (see April 3rd).

May 3 ♦ Friday

BiWomen submission deadline. Theme: Women of Color. Submissions on all subjects welcome. Send calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, book or movie reviews to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

May 4 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Club Night. 9:30 p.m. (no cover before 10 p.m.) at Quest, 1270 Boylston St., Boston. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

May 5 ♦ Sunday

Volunteer Training and Potluck, 4 p.m., at the Bi Office. Enjoy good food and help the BRC provide more and better service to the community. Even if you can't volunteer, please bring something yummy and join us.

Bi Space. 7-9p.m. First hour's topic: "sharing experiences with younger or newer bisexuals." (see April 7th)

May 8 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Coming Out Group for Women. (see April

10th)

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

May 10 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. (see April 12)

May 12 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. Please join us for a fun night of dancing at a club packed with women. (see April 14th)

May 15 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Coming Out Group for Women. (see April 10th)

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9 p.m. (see April 17th)

May 18 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11 a.m., at Thornton's at 100 Peterborough Street in Boston's Fenway. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

May 19 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Video Potluck Brunch, 11:30 a.m. Call Jay at (617)782-4235 or email him at js@aq.org for directions.

May 19 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Picnic at 12:30 p.m. Bring some picnic fare and join us for Lilac Sunday at the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain, featuring dance troupes and other entertainment. Come celebrate the season! Call Debbie at (617) 731-9060 for info.

May 21 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9p.m. (see April 3rd)

May 23 ♦ Sunday

Bisexual Rap Group. Hartford, CT. 7 p.m. (See April 28th)

May 26 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch at Picante, 735 Mass. Ave. in Cambridge. 1:30 p.m. Nearest T stop is Central Square on the Red Line.

May 28 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Read *BiWomen* hot off the press, see old friends and meet new ones. Please come help get the newsletter out. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office.

June 10 - 13 ♦ Monday - Thursday

Northwest Bisexuals Annual Campout in the Wenatchee National Forest in Washington. Sponsored by the Bisexual Network of Oregon. All bisexuals and their guests are welcome. Info: Kurt, (503) 299-4764.

Volunteers Needed

The Bisexual Resource Center needs volunteers who are willing to donate one evening or afternoon per month to help make the center work better. The tasks are easy. Things like answering phone calls, filing new arrivals into the archives, updating the bulletin board, transcribing phone messages, and mailing information to people who have requested it. If you can help, call the center at (617)424-9595 and leave a message for Liam.



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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

BBWN

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The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. For info call (617) 424-9595.

Ongoing Events

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. Please call the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, for info as we are trying to revive the group. (617) 354-8807.

L/G/B Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals. Concert band, no auditions. 7:00-9:00pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 825-2333.



Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm, Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

April 3 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Small donation requested to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info (617) 424-9595.

April 7 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. First hour's topic: "bisexuals, monogamy, and polyamory." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. Bispac takes place 7-9 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

April 9 ♦ Tuesday

BBWN Planning Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Please join us to help plan our Spring activities leading up to Pride. Nothing will happen if we don't organize it! All women welcome.

April 10 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Coming Out Group for Women. Wednesdays through May 15, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Call Ann for info at 923-8716. If the current group is full, she'll take your name for future sessions.

April 12 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m., at The Casual Cup, 1362 Beacon Street, Brookline. Nearest T stop is Coolidge Corner, on the C branch of the Green Line. Sponsored by Biversity Boston, the area's mixed gender, bi social network.

April 12-14 ♦ Friday - Sunday

Full Circle of Women, a radically different exploration of what it means to be a woman, in Essex, MA. For all women-identified individuals - transgendered, nontransgendered, transsexual, and intersex people - living as women. Scholarships available. Info: The Center for Gender Sanity, (508) 386-7737.

April 13 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Matinee at the Brattle Theater in Cambridge. Meet at 12:40 p.m. at the ticket office. Several short films by and about the bisexual writer Paul Bowles start at 1 p.m. Nearest T stop is Harvard Square on the Red Line.

April 14 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. What better way to usher in spring - when a young woman's fancy turns to... Women! Tea dance is from 5-10 p.m. 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge.

April 16 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see April 3rd)

April 17 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Coming Out Group for Women. (see April

10th)

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people.

April 18 Thursday

Biversity Movie at the Brattle Theater in Cambridge. Meet at the ticket office at 7:20 p.m. to see *Arabian Nights*, a visually stunning film with both gay and straight story lines. Nearest T stop is Harvard Square on the Red Line.

April 19 ♦ Friday

Queers of Color Coming Together at Ohio State University (Columbus). Info: (614)486-5664 or email sharifax@aol.com

April 20 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch. 11 a.m. at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Somerville, across from the Davis Square T stop.

The Dinner Party '96, an evening of dinner and dancing to benefit women's health services at the Fenway Community Health Center. Boston Marriott at Copley Place. Tickets are \$85. Info: (617) 247-2273.

April 20-21 ♦ Saturday - Sunday

Out And Equal In The '90s conference on making work places safer for G/L/B/T employees. San Francisco, CA. Scholarships avail. Info: 202-332-6483, ext. 3444 (phone), 202-332-6219 (TTY)

April 24 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Coming Out Group for Women. (see April 10th)

April 26 - 28 ♦ Friday - Sunday

BECAUSE '96, the Fifth Annual Midwest bi conference in Minneapolis, MN. Info: (612)813-1383

April 27 ♦ Saturday

Swingtime Record Hop at Ballet Etc., 185 Corey St., Brookline, at 9 p.m. Swing and ballroom dancing. Beginners lesson at 8 p.m. Info: 739-9330.



April 28 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch at Ann's in Watertown. 11:30 a.m. Please join us to share a meal and conversation with so many wonderful women. Accesible by MBTA bus lines. Call Ann at 923-8716 for directions.

Biversity Brunch. A Korean buffet at Arirang, 162 Mass. Ave., Boston. Nearest T stop is Auditorium on the Green Line.

Bisexual Rap Group meets every fourth Sunday at 7 p.m. at the GLBT Community Center, Hartford, CT. All bisexual, bi-curious and bi-friendly people are welcome.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

Women of Color Issue

Untitled

by Mary Ann Brooks

Baring my chest to you
grabbing my heart
out of its place of blood, safety, warmth.

Kneading your skin with my hands.
Kissing your eyelids.
Whispering, shivering, being quickened.
Flesh.

How many women can you feel
underneath your skin?
Women who have touched you
their way.
Your body fingerprinted with their pain.
Your body fingerprinted with their story of need.

What does it mean to you, brown man?
The fingerprints of a sister,
another sister,
and another sister
imprinted in the hollows of your back
the recesses of your ear.

Does the memory of love burn you?
Does the memory of touch
remind you
of the women
you never felt?



Book review: *The Same River Twice*, Alice Walker, Scribner, 1996

by [REDACTED]

In Alice Walker's new book, she affirms herself as a beautiful bisexual black woman, for the first time publicly, to my knowledge. *The Same River Twice* is a memoir, focusing on a period of intense transformations in her life: those brought on by Steven Spielberg's filming of her novel, *The Color Purple*, a decade ago.

The essays and journal entries in this book are a record of how her spirit navigated the traumas of sudden fame, the overwhelming adoration by her fans and the unrestrained hostility of her critics.

For me, her openness about sexuality was healing. In describing her version of the screenplay, which was not used, she says, "It was clear the women loved each other. It was clear that Shug is, like me, bisexual. That Celie is lesbian. Do I regret my version of the book was not filmed? I have accepted that it wasn't. But to balance this experience, I have felt a need to share what I did attempt."

I remember arguing with my father and his friend, defending that the movie I had just seen, at age sixteen, was not about lesbians. I saw it again a couple of months ago and was incredibly moved, this time, by all the *womanism* in it, and in myself.

In this book, Alice Walker says she does not want to be a role model for anyone. But she *is* a foremother, although alive among her followers to experience the insanities and stresses of celebrity in this culture.

I found the topic of celebrity fascinating, because the arts are not democratic in our society. A tiny few are lavished with attention and pressure, while the creativity of most people goes suppressed and untapped. Creativity is sacred and powerful, and it is in each of us equally. When this magic is exploited, we see how the lives of the famous become drowned by the strain of the resulting excesses.

In *River*, Alice also continues to explore her identity as a pagan, "people whose primary spiritual relationship is with Nature and the earth." I once heard the writer Starhawk, also bi-

Alice Walker continues on page 4

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Volunteers of the Month



Robyn Ochs

Asha

Megan

Carla

Catherine

Claire M.

Debbie

Deborah Levine

Maryellen

Rachel

Dawn

And many more
wonderful women!
You know who
you are! Thank
you, thank you,
thank you!

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this
issue of BiWomen:

Linda Blair

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

BBWWN Steering Committee Meeting, April 9, 1996

The first issue discussed was the Women of Color newsletter issue and how to continue to encourage women of color to join and contribute. [redacted] had printed and distributed fliers asking for submissions.

A special mailing of the newsletter to members of queer women of color groups, etc., was suggested and Deborah volunteered to look into obtaining mailing lists and making contacts. Who to target and what our goals should be in this outreach were discussed. We agreed to ask for volunteers to host another Women of Color brunch in the near future.

A report on the coming out group was positive. They had received 20 calls and had allowed 14 people into the group. The age range was from the 20's to the 40's and there was a broad range of interests. With the names from the waiting list, there is a pool to do another session later in the year.

We brainstormed future issue themes for the newsletter. Election/Politics was decided upon as the theme for the Aug./September issue. Men will be the theme for the October/November issue. Body Image was brought up as a possible theme for the Dec./Jan. issues, as was Erotica.

The Pride Subcommittee reported on their meeting. A night before get-together will be held as there was last year. (See Calendar). Biversity will hold their Pride Day brunch as usual. We will also be sharing a table with Biversity at the Pride Festival. The BBWN banner is still missing and discussions ranged on whether to get one made or make one ourselves. Kate volunteered to get prices, and Tina said she could make the banner if that was the decision. The Subcommittee had also set up a T-shirt contest, which unfortunately did not receive any entries.

Deborah mentioned that the Dyke March scheduled to start before the main Pride march might be in conflict with the Biversity Brunch; she was going to check on it and discuss it with

Meeting continues on page 10

Coming in *BiWomen*:

The theme for the Aug./Sept. issue:
Politics/The Elections

Bi Politics (in and out of the Gay Community), Bi activists in the major political parties, and other ideas are
welcome!

DEADLINE for the Aug./Sept. issue:
Friday, July 5

Upcoming: The theme for the Oct./Nov. issue
will be **MEN**.

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on disk (PC or Mac), and include a name or phone number if possible.

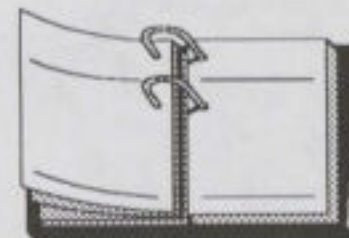
If you do **not** want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA 02140



Want to be informed of bi events and informal get togethers?

Tired of knowing *BiWomen* only through pieces of paper?

BBWN is forming a phone list !!!

The list will be restricted to use by the BBWN Steering Committee and will be used to remind you of upcoming events and events that didn't make it into the newsletter calendar. (We may also occasionally call to see if you are interested in volunteering for any activities - hosting a brunch, helping with fundraising, etc.).

To sign up for the phone list, give us a call at (617) 424-9595 and leave a message indicating that you want to be included on the list.

Inside Pride: An Interview with Laura L. Sachs

by Linda Blair

In April 1996, another major step in the evolution of bisexual visibility and pride was taken when long-time BBWN member and bisexual activist Laura L. Sachs was elected as President of the Board of Pride Committee, Incorporated, the group which since 1993 has been legally and fiscally responsible for organizing Pride Week in Boston. The following interview reflects some of her thoughts at this historic moment.

BBWN: Congratulations, Laura. You must be really excited. This is a real victory for bi visibility and inclusion. Do you know of any other out bisexuals holding similar positions elsewhere in the country?

LAURA: Thank you. I'm absolutely thrilled. No, as far as I know I'm the first out bisexual to become President of a Pride Committee Board anywhere in the country. I'm the only Jewish, Large woman in such a position as well, which I see as another important first.

BBWN: I know you've been involved in queer activism for many years. Can you tell us a bit of your personal history? How did you get started as a Pride activist?

LAURA: Well, when I attended my first Pride march in 1978 there was no bisexual anything - no groups to march with, no T-shirts or buttons to help you be visible. But even then I felt it was important to come out to people as bi. I have always been committed to being authentic; I want to be myself. And I think this attitude has helped me a lot over the years.

I've been organizing for Pride within the bi community ever since there's been a bi community - registering to march, getting display space and permits, helping to organizing the bi brunch on Pride day. I've been an activist and a leader in the bi community for a long time, although I don't often think of myself in those terms.

As the bi community's liaison to Pride, I've

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PRIDE
without borders
BOSTON 1996

always been out as bi to everyone involved with Pride. Early on, biphobia was much more prevalent than it is today. Still, looking back I can see that I sometimes interpreted ways I was treated as biphobic when that's not really what was happening.

In 1993, I became an unofficial member of the Pride Committee and was asked to be "Traffic Control Queen" for the whole parade. It was a LOT harder than I was told it would be. But it was great for bi visibility. That year everyone who marched out of Copley Square had to walk past me wearing my Bi Pride T-shirt and see that an out bisexual was in charge. That fall I was recognized for my skills and the excellent work I'd done by being voted onto the Board of Pride Committee, Incorporated.

BBWN: Has your presence helped make

Pride continues on page 7

PRIDE '96 LOGO AND GRAPHICS BY STEPHEN BURDICK DESIGN.

Volunteers Needed

Cooperative Economics for Women is seeking women of color to work as volunteer facilitators with five training cooperatives. CEW's mission is to organize with low-income women, especially women of color, immigrant and refugee women, and women surviving domestic violence, to create small income-generating cooperatives using the skills participants already have.

Volunteers would serve as facilitators in weekly meetings with CEW's cooperatives. Training will be provided. For details, call Rebecca Johnson or Betsy Erbaugh at (617) 266-1316, or write Cooperative Economics for Women, 32 Rutland Street, Boston, MA 02118.



Women: Clearing Out Our Closets

Many of us fear to be open about all of our sexual selves, because they don't fit the category (lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, monogamous, polyamorous) in which we outwardly participate.

We fear that greater honesty might jeopardize personal, social or professional relationships that nourish us in other ways. It is stressful and lonely to be partially hidden.

A respectful, caring, confidential group to talk about who you truly are. About what it's like to exist in a society that's divided into orientation boxes that probably don't really quite fit anyone. About the values of competitiveness, fear, and judgement that imbue those boxes and how they affect us.

For a few hours a week, let's let go, of "in or out" "sick or healthy" "politically correct or not" and make a space to release the stress, solidify our choices and bolster them with each other's respect and support.

5 Tuesday Evenings: 7:30-9:30. 7/2, 7/9, 7/16, & 7/23 & 7/31. \$ 25.00 p. eve.

Other Summer Groups:

♦**Making Friends With Anger: Yours and Others'** 3 eve.s \$75

♦**Home Is Where the Heart Is: Women Claiming Our Bodies— as They Are** 5 eve.s \$125

♦**Women' Summer Power Circle: Creative & WymynSpirit Tools for Success.** 7/27 9-5. \$65.

Emily Page, MA, LMHC. 617.393.9579

expressive and traditional approaches. recovery from addictions, co-dependency and abuse. bisexual, gay and lesbian concerns. spiritual integration. clinical supervision.

The Winter/Spring 1996 issue of *Crossroads*, a magazine supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender youth, focuses on youth of color. Articles include features on a young black lesbian in South Africa, and a Chinese teenager coping with the dual burdens of adjusting to a new culture and accepting his homosexuality. Also included are resources and tactics to make queer groups more comfortable for people of color.

Crossroads is published by the Bridges Project of the American Friends Service Committee. You can contact them at 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Phone: (215) 241-7133, e-mail BridgesPro@aol.com.

Gi Gi

by Mary Ann Brooks

This little girl has cornrows.
This little girl is brown.
This little girl is fearless.
This little girl seldom smiles.
This little girl touches other little girls.
This little girl is lonely.

Don't tell her that she's lonely,
that there is beauty in cornrows.
Don't tell her that she touches other little girls,
or that her skin is a pretty brown.
Don't tell her that she lights up the heavens
when she smiles,
that she doesn't have to be fearless.

Because she has learned to be fearless.
She has learned to be lonely.
She has learned to withhold her smiles.
And there have been people who spit on her cornrows,
who call her skin, shit-colored brown.
And she is bitter, now, because she's a little brown girl.

Because she's a little brown girl
who has learned to be fearless,
and lives in streets filled with sad skins that
are brown,
because she has nothing, nobody to play with
— she is lonely.
Her story is told in the weaving of her cornrows.
Her story is told in the absence of her smiles.

It is summer, she's at camp, she is running,
she smiles.

She is surrounded by other little girls
who are running with her, who also have
cornrows,
who also have learned to be fearless,
who are together now, running together, not
lonely —
together — like chocolates in a heart-shaped
box, chocolates all shades of brown.

Love your skin, little girl — your skin that
drips chocolate-brown.
Love your face, little girl, give yourself a
smile.
Love yourself, little girl, it's okay to be
lonely.
Love your girlness, little girl, feel it in your
touching of another little girl.
Love your heart, little girl, it can have fear
and be fearless.
Love your hair, little girl, with its fertile field
of delicious cornrows.

And survive, little girl, be bold, be brave, be
fearless.
And be beautiful, little girl, put dandelions
and buttercups in the twists of each
cornrow.
And be a girl, little girl, love your mamma,
love your sister, love other little girls. ▽

Alice Walker from page 1

sexual, say she didn't know people of color
who used the word pagan. Alice Walker af-
firms this innate spirituality of black women
who will recognize their own earthiness and
sensual sacredness here.

My one disappointment was that, in this
book devoted to exploring the consequences of
fame, she barely mentioned the financial as-
pects of it. The stories of those who go from
one end of the class spectrum to the other in
the same lifetime, as Alice did, are so impor-
tant, not unlike, I imagine, walking the
tightrope between communities as a bisexual.

Still, she devoted the main chapters of the
book to delicately, bravely, and with great
honesty, honoring her woman-identified sexu-
ality. We can take her words as a beacon, a
reflection, an inspiration and a loving chal-
lenge:


...with this spirit, this hair, this skin, this
fluid, whole sexuality,
this vision and this heart, I dare not apolo-
gize. I am too grateful. ▽

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The Biracial Gift

by [REDACTED]

When I was nineteen, I wrote the following poem:

My Group

Philippine
Black
Japanese-Jew
Mayflower line
Afro-white
This garland of a
Delicate balance we
Never considered,
Points on a many-sided
Star
Come together, meet
On common ground
The only child times
Five, plus
Two oldests of four
We were no accident
A sort of gentleness
To our hard edged
Brilliance
And a home in our
Difference

One of the most amazing gifts of biracial people is that we often cause biracial communities to form around us. To borrow a term that bisexuals sometimes use, we biracial people often find that we bring together "monoracial" people into multiracial groups.

We also find our way to other children of mixed marriages. And recently, I noticed that most of my friends were bisexual women, themselves in interracial heterosexual lover relationships.

An interracial community is not exactly a black community, although it is often a community of color. It is not exactly a white community. The heritage that members often share is that of being "border people." Sometimes it is that of being "this bridge called my back." Ethnicity is still honored, not blurred to erasure. We affirm in one another an experience that is both significantly common and just as invisible.

In high school, I thought the group I wrote about in the poem was everyone's experience. I went to a large, statistically very integrated public high school in Los Angeles. It was not until several years later that I realized the rest of the school, beyond my friends, was sharply divided along color lines, among other things.

There were similarities to this in my first experiences in feminist communities. I found the ones that were multiracial: not just one or two races, but at least three or four, with several children of mixed marriages to keep me company. This still came naturally, although at this point, part of it may have been luck.

I started college and felt occasionally insane from being suddenly surrounded by so many wealthy people for the first time, recording these feelings frequently in my diary at the time but not understanding the emotions for many years.

I was forced to leave college due to a series of complicated crises, including family rejection of my bisexuality. I certainly know whites as well as people of color who share this experience, as well as families of all races who have been tremendously supportive of their bisexual and gay children.

My friends have been high school graduates (one, last year, at age 25) as well as college educated, with a number of "delayed degrees." They have been from quite a mix of poor and rich backgrounds. Several have gone from one financial class to another in their young lifetimes.

As border people we seem like a minority in the most delicate position, yet the experiences we distill together are often exquisite.

I came into my own political consciousness as something I had been yearning for throughout childhood. My parents were in an interracial marriage for reasons that I do not believe included "political correctness." I'm

Biracial continues on page 6

Celebrate Gay Pride with Mexican Women

CETLALIC (Centro Tlahuica de Lenguas e Intercambio Cultural, A.C.) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, is offering a special three week "Lesbian Program in Mexico" from June 22 to July 12, 1996. Participants will live in a Mexican lesbian-friendly house, learn Spanish, attend talks and workshops with Mexican lesbians, and attend the Gay Pride March in Mexico City and the Gay Cultural Week. Cost is \$1,100. For further information, contact CETLALIC/ Apdo. Post. 1-201/ Cuernavaca, Morelos, 6200/ Mexico. Phone is (5273) 12 67 18; email is cetlalic@laneta.apc.org



BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

Psychotherapy and Consultation

2326B MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
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617.497.6581

Mamaroots

Mamaroots is an Afragoddess Spiritual and Cultural Sistahood Network, founded by the artist Asungi, who is known for her stunning paintings of black woman-identified imagery.

Mamaroots is dedicated to the development, explanation and practical application of Afracentrik spiritual and cultural awareness. It is a network of support for remembering our Afracentrik selves, spiritually, culturally, mentally and emotionally.

Mamaroots is a forum for Afrikan sistahs in search of their Afracentrik and Afragoddess selves.

continued on next page

Biracial from page 5

sure they were opinionated, but in ways they often did not clearly reveal to me (including the surprise, or my own innocent denial, of their homophobia). I went to intellectual but apathetic public schools. My hometown is one of the most "integrated" cities in the world, and also the place of the most racially charged courtroom trials in recent memory.

When I first became politicized about racism, I decided to briefly, but mainly, identify as black, a woman of color. Similarly, with my sexuality, I felt "lesbian-identified" for a short but significant time.

One of my first and only opportunities to talk with a large group of adult children of mixed marriages was at the conference celebrating author Audre Lorde in 1990. We had a discussion group, and I bravely said being biracial was very much like being bisexual, noticing a lovely tan skinned woman nod in agreement.

Biracial activism does exist, but perhaps even less visibly than bisexual activism. Some of the resources that exist include the magazine *Interrace* (where I learned that Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, was biracial and bisexual), and the book *Miscegenation Blues: Voices of Mixed Race Women*, among others.

My half dozen years in Boston have been colored, no pun intended, by an interracial group of friends more important to me than

my family, as well as the town's legendary unapologetic segregation. This carries into the women's community, where I have struggled with this unfamiliar separation, including the hurtful remarks of a couple of insecure women of various colors.

Then there were the voices of Jasmine Guy, star of the TV show "A Different World," actress Halle Berry, and Lisa Jones, writer for *The Village Voice* and biracial daughter of Black Power author LeRoi Jones. All of these biracial ladies stated they only identified as black, but not biracial! Ooh, that made me mad. Having a white mom for your primary female role model in life, as all of us did, is very different from having two parents of the same race. Not better or worse, but quite a distinct experience.

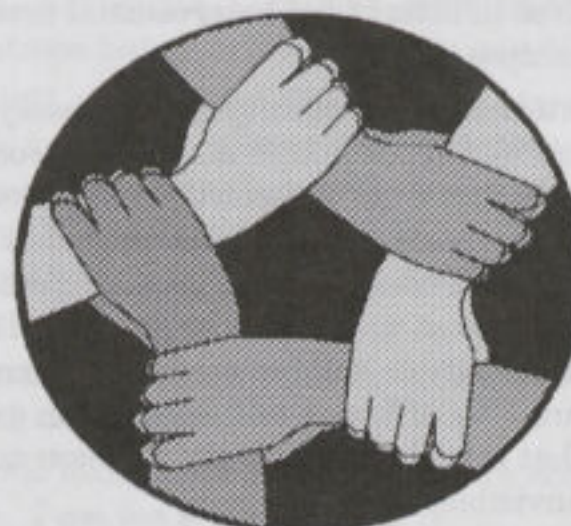
I hope there will be a day when there are lots of roles for biracial actresses to play *biracial* characters, and black roles can accurately be offered to black women without the "privilege" of white genes. Sound familiar?

Now I finally understand what those women meant at the Audre Lorde conference who said they were 100% black and 100% white. After feeling genuinely inferior while growing up, then identifying politically only as a woman of color, I can now say that I *also* identify as white, which has floored most people that I would actually say the words. I have had white experiences and I am willing to identify with them. I also identify as black. And biracial. One hundred percent.

One of my biggest loves was another interracial woman. My partner of the past four years has been a sweet, androgynous white man who is not very much like either of my parents.

Who is it that we draw to ourselves, and to whom are we drawn? For people who were born biracial and those who are biracial at heart, we often find those who enlarge our worlds, amplify our own spirits, and create communities with us that look beautiful, spectacular, and, to us, ordinary, all at once.

ALL Bi, MYSELF K. Douthit



Panty Liners a "Must See"

by [REDACTED]

This year's Theater Offensive "Plays at Work" series opened with *Panty Liners*, an intricate and powerfully erotic depiction of African-American Lesbian experience by Robin G. White. This work in progress was previously performed last fall at the Out On The Edge Theater Festival as a staged reading. While I did not attend the reading, friends had described it to me as "hot" and "pretty racy." The full production this May was definitely both of those and more. I found the show to be exciting, unusual, fun, and a "must-see."

The performance consisted of vignettes or sketches which blended the spoken word, music, and movement in order to explore themes such as the dating scene, sex, race, queer-bashing, and butch-femme roles. The scenes had a surreal quality and were rendered with passion and energy.

I would describe the play overall as an unabashedly erotic celebration of sexuality. One particularly memorable scene consisted of one performer lying across the backs of the other cast members as they moved on all fours around the stage area. The effect was a lovely undulating motion, as the woman on top used words and sound to depict an act of lovemaking from beginning to climax. Other scenes hit similarly erotic chords. Also, the actors' movements frequently brought them in to daringly close proximity with audience members. The energy they projected towards us at these moments felt surprisingly intimate and contributed to the mood of the piece.

In a culture which attempts to either fetishize the sexuality of disenfranchised groups or render it invisible, *Panty Liners* stands not only as art, but as a joyful act of resistance. I continue to appreciate through this production The Theater Offensive's real commitment to diversity and look forward to seeing more from Robin G. White in the future.

Jean Chapin Smith, LICSW, BCD

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Pride from page 3

Pride more inclusive? Can you tell us about the experience of being an out bisexual member of the Pride Board? As a Board member, how have you dealt with biphobia?

LAURA: The level of and commitment to inclusivity surrounding Pride has really ebbed and flowed over the years, depending on which activists have gotten involved in organizing it. I thought bi comic Michael Dane's performance at last year's Pride Festival was a significant focal point, but I can only remember two previous years when anyone specifically spoke from a bi perspective.

As the only bisexual and the only Jew on the board, I've had to deal with my share of overt and covert biphobia, hostility, and dismissal. Dealing with the influential "Old Boys' Network" has often been difficult. But as hard as that has sometimes been, I've always felt that if I were visible, I could help to move things toward greater diversity. Because I have been visible and accessible, many activists interested in inclusivity have come to me with their concerns. I've often facilitated communication between the Board of Pride Committee, Inc. and the Pride Committee volunteers on issues of gender and racial diversity, and bi and transgender inclusivity.

At times, the stresses of the job and of being the only bisexual on the board have made me frustrated, angry, annoyed, or sad and I've wanted to resign. At other times, being involved has thrilled and excited me. Now I'm ecstatic that I stuck with it, both because of the more inclusive atmosphere I've helped to create and because I believe it's vital for everyone to be visible as their authentic selves.

BBWN: I've noticed that this year's Pride Week events are officially being promoted as "Pride Without Borders: gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender & allies." Sounds fantastic. What can we look forward to?

LAURA: Well, there's plenty of great events planned all week long, starting with the flag raising at City Hall Plaza on Monday June 3, Pride Lights on Tuesday night, the "Town Meeting" at Faneuil Hall on Wednesday night, a "not to be missed" Thursday night Hatch Shell movie with some AWESOME surprises in store, one women's and one mixed boat cruise on Friday night, and a commitment ceremony at 10 am Saturday morning, June 8, co-sponsored by the Freedom to Marry Coalition before the parade kicks off at noon from Copley Square. I know this year's Pride Committee Co-chairs are also very supportive of broad inclusivity, so I'm also

Pride continues on page 10

from previous page

Wimmin of any ethnic background who wish to develop an Afracentrik spiritual philosophy are welcome to join, especially wimmin of Afrikan ancestry. We are a sistahood devoted to recreating a healthy Afrikan female-centered self-loving community, based on our ancient ancestral Afrikan traditions, but not restricted by them, to forge a new tradition that can sustain us in our daily lives.

Membership includes a subscription to the *Mamaroots* magazine published three times yearly. You may request brochures from the following address, as well as order a single issue of the magazine for \$8, or a year's subscription and membership for \$25. Write to: MAMAROOTS Productions, P.O. Box 16151, Oakland, CA 94160.



© Asungi

New from Hayworth
Press:

Lesbians of Color, edited by Hilda Hidalgo, PhD, ACSW. Built around principles of "feminist standpoint theory," the contributors explore the deep-seated impacts of racism, sexism and homophobia in our society. \$9.95 paperback; for ordering info or a catalog call 1-800-342-9678.



Culture and Color

Bay Press publishes books on contemporary culture. Among their current titles are *Black Popular Culture*, edited by Gina Dent, which includes numerous essays from straight and queer contributors (including bell hooks and Marlon Riggs), and *Let's Get it On: The Politics of Black Performance*, edited by Catherine Ugwu. To order books from Bay Press directly, call them at 206-284-5913.

Seeing Dell by Carol Guess (Cleis Press, 1996)

reviewed by Debbie Block-Schwenk

In *Seeing Dell*, Carol Guess paints a rich and fascinating picture of small town life and the relationships between the inhabitants, centering around a beautiful, enigmatic, bisexual woman named Dell. Through the alternating voices of five narrators, each a vivid and unforgettable individual, the reader gets a gradually evolving picture both of Dell and of her town, a picture so real that this reviewer wanted to read the book a second time to pick up the clues and nuances she missed the first time around.

Four years ago, Dell was killed in a car crash, leaving behind Copeland, the man she was living with, Terry, the woman very few people knew she cared deeply for, and a host of memories and unanswered questions. As we grieve with Dell's lovers, hear their stories, the reader is drawn into their world and to the other people there whose lives are touched in some way by Dell: Nora, drawn to Copeland but unable to reach past his grief, James who understands what it is like to be split apart, and Maureen, reaching out through abuse and abandonment to growth and Copeland's friendship.

Seeing Dell is as much about seeing as it is about Dell — it is about the different truths that rise from different perceptions, different desires, the limitations of our individual world views. Who really knew Dell? Did Copeland, her fellow taxi driver who brought her into herself and taught her love? Did Terry, the black drama teacher Dell was slowly moving toward a commitment with, who taught her risk and excitement and the love of another woman? Did James, Dell's manipulative and homophobic boss who despite that felt a kinship with her because he's also always split between loving two people but knew that Dell "had it worse: split between men and women both, half-normal, half-queer." From each of the narrators we gain different pieces of the story of their lives, and indirectly the story of Dell, but no stories are given



closure. All the characters see Dell in some form: living or ghost, photos or inside their heads, etched in Copeland's grief or colored with James' confused sympathy, but each sees her in a different way.

There are many themes to the book that complement the collage of memories: colors, paintings, the bonds between women, dualities, love triangles. The bisexual themes of duality are constant undercurrents with even the heterosexual characters. James is a cruel, insensitive man, but it is he (despite his bigotry) who speaks most clearly with a "bi" voice: "Dell and I were kin: her heart's number was two, just like mine...I know what it's like to be split, always wanting something more than what you have. To act differently with the two people in your life." Nora, a "straight" woman who recollects one girlfriend, answers him as well as speaking to Dell's ghost (and to the reader): "James' mistake was thinking it was possible to be anything but split in two. No one can be everything for another person; it's not a mistake to want that, but it's a mistake to think you can find it."

As befits a novel about a bi woman with two lovers, the theme of the triangle is over echoed over and over. Terry leaves Jane to pursue her relationship with Dell. James, Nora and Copeland form a temporary triangle, transmuted into a different shape on the night Nora and Copeland form a trio with the ghostly image of Dell's memory. When Terry and Copeland meet, he wants only to thank her for her friendship with Dell. It is Terry, aware of the triangle they still form with Dell, who invites him to have dinner with her, trying to heal the breach in each of them: "I can't shake the feeling that if I could just talk to Cope — really talk — I'd find the missing pieces..."

They don't really talk, but as befits this rich and eloquent book, their healing is symbolic. Terry gives Copeland a painting (painted by Jane) of three women in a circle, a painting that had been Dell's favorite. By passing the painting on to a man, Terry includes him in the bond she had with Dell and acknowledges Dell's bisexuality. By giving up the picture of three women, Terry also heals herself of

Dell continues on next page

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Plural Desires, Writing Bisexual Women's Lives

edited by the Bisexual Anthology Collective

reviewed by Christine Lee

Plural Desires is an open, heart warming collection of writings, poetry, interviews, cartoons, and erotica written by bisexual women. This anthology invites us to dive into the depths of bisexuality and listen to the life experiences and challenges faced by these women as they grapple with their identity as bisexuals and its intersection with race, ethnicity, sexuality, desire, and homophobia as evident in their lives. Their experiences are real, and it is difficult not to find a story that you can connect with and understand, even think it's your own.

Unlike previous anthologies (*Closer To Home* and *Bi Any Other Name*) this collection is Canadian based, but many of the viewpoints of these women do not differ greatly from those in the US despite the cultural difference.

Plural Desires adds interviews and conversations into its anthology for a different means of expressing viewpoints on bisexuality, giving us a feel for the actual thought process and debate that others have surrounding this topic. *Plural Desires* doesn't concentrate on one particular aspect of bisexuality like *Closer To Home*, which focused on bisexuality and feminism, but aims for a broader approach towards bisexuality while still allowing its contributors to express their political and feminist opinions.

As an introduction to bisexuality, *Plural Desires* offers no simple explanation of the world of bisexuality, but it does offer honesty and a diversity of opinions that reflect the very reality of the lives of bisexual women as they find a way and a means to voice their stories.

Christine Lee is a dancer and an undergraduate. She was a student in Robyn Ochs bisexuality seminar at Tufts University last semester.

.....
Dell from previous page

Dell, and Jane, and can freely decide whether to go back to Jane or find a new partner.

Seeing Dell is an intense, fascinating book about truth, character, relationships, and memory, from a bisexual author. Carol Guess has a genuine talent for writing strong characters, detailed imagery, and vivid settings; enjoy this book (her first novel) and wait eagerly for her next one.

A Clear View

Another late night embrace.
Long unplanned kisses in front seats.
Alone now,
I wipe away your sweat that blurs my glasses
and try to see more clearly.
Erasing the traces of our confusing attraction.

But when the lenses are clear
I still see
your deep brown eyes
your wry smile
your swirls of dark hair.

And with closed eyes
I still feel
your searching eyes,
your suck on my lip
your hair falling past my face.

And I feel my shoulder
tender
from bracing against the wall
to take you against me
again and again.

Too many traces to
simply wipe away.

Ellyn Ruthstrom

International Archives

The One Institute, home of the International Gay and Lesbian Archives, is located in Hollywood, California, is about to have a new home on the campus of the University of Southern California.

For information on this organization, which collects historical materials on homosexual behavior and identity from around the world (and is currently making a special effort to collect materials from Latin America), contact them at P.O. Box 69679/
West Hollywood, CA 90069. Phone is (310) 854-0271; e-mail oneigla@aol.com



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Call for Submission: An Anthology About Bisexual Men

Essays are now being accepted for a collection of political, historical and theoretical essays about bisexual men. This will be the first anthology to focus on bisexual men in the U.S. and the first bi book to have most of the contributors be bisexual men (essays by bisexual women which address their experiences with bisexual men will also be accepted).

Essays for the book should engage larger theoretical and/or political discourses around bisexuality and not simply be personal narratives or coming out stories.

The deadline for submissions is Oct. 1, 1996. For guidelines or more information, contact Brett Beemyn, P.O. Box 584, Iowa City, Iowa 52244 (SASE appreciated). 319-354-5793, brett-beemyn@uiowa.edu.

Pride from page 7

hoping we'll see some very diverse speakers at the rally at Lederman Field after the march.

I can't emphasize enough how much I would love to see lots of out and visible bisexuals walking through the doors that they've helped to open by having a great time with everybody else this Pride Week. The bottom line is that the way to get things to change is to attend some of the events and to be yourself. Bisexuals should know that we're welcome to party with everybody else and there's plenty of folks looking forward to having us party with them.

In recent years Pride has gone from a parade to an entire week of events, and more events require more people to organize them. Organizing for 1997 Pride Week will likely start in the fall, and people can watch Bay Windows and the Phoenix for listings of meetings. I wholeheartedly encourage every person who wants Pride to continue evolving, to never underestimate their own power to become involved and affect positive change.

Meeting from page 2

the parties involved.

A partial phone list of people to contact for activities was circulated; it will be used only by members of the steering committee.

The Marriage Resolution was reaffirmed after the text was read and will be submitted to Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders as being accepted by the BBWN Steering Committee. Any one willing to work on same-gender marriage issues should leave a message for Debbie Block-Schwenk in the office.

Kate again brought up budget matters and it was agreed that the next meeting will focus on budgetary and fund-raising matters and establishing a long-range fiscal plan or budget. The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 19 at 7 PM. All women are welcome!

Submitted by Debbie Block-Schwenk and Rosalie

BRC Expands Resources Through Volunteers

By Debbie Block-Schwenk

The Bisexual Resource Center is open for business! While the BRC has had an office for many years, it has not had regular staffing or office hours during most of that time. This is changing! Volunteers will now begin to staff the office, allowing the BRC to respond to phone calls and requests for information more quickly, and to update the bi archives more efficiently.

Ideally, once a full team of volunteers have signed on, the office will be staffed every Tuesday and Thursday evening, and one Saturday and Sunday afternoon a month.

More volunteers are needed. This is a great way to contribute to your office, meet new people and explore the wide variety of Bi and Gay publications from throughout the world that the BRC receives.

There will be a volunteer meeting on Thursday, June 13th at 7:30 PM. To sign up to volunteer or for more info, leave a message on the office machine (617-424-9595) for Liam.

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CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

July 3 - 7 ♦ Wednesday - Sunday

Biversity Camping in Provincetown at Coastal Acres Camping Court. You must make your own reservations. Coastal Acres' phone number is (508) 487-1700. Call Dana at (617) 889-7142 for info (but not for reservations).

July 5 ♦ Friday

BiWomen submission deadline. The August/September issue's theme is "Politics and the Elections". Write about your own political ideas, political activism you've been involved in, bi politics as you see 'em, etc. Send articles, calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, book or movie reviews to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

July 7 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. 7-9 p.m. First hour's topic: "relating to lesbian/gay/straight communities." (see June 2nd)

women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people.

July 12 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. at The Casual Cup, 1362 Beacon Street, Brookline. Nearest T stop is Coolidge Corner, on the C branch of the Green Line. Sponsored by Biversity Boston, the area's mixed

gender, bi social network.

July 14 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Outing to the Randolph Country Club. Swim, dance, and lounge at this gay country club south of Boston. Meet at noon at the Blue Diner on Kneeland Street in Boston to car pool. Nearest T stop is South Station on the Red Line.

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. Put on your dancing shoes and get ready to party with a club full of women. Upstairs at 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge. 7-11 p.m.

July 16 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see June 5th)

July 20 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch at 11 a.m. at Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square, Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

July 21 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Bruch. 11 a.m. Please join us for tasty food and awesome company at Ananda and Amy's in Somerville. T accessible. For info and directions, call 776-1008. All women welcome.

July 28 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch. 1:30 p.m. Share Ethiopian food at Addis Red Sea, 544 Tremont Street in Boston's South End. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

July 30 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. A fun time for a great cause. The newsletter belongs to us all - please come help get it in the mail. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office.



August 2 - 4 ♦ Friday - Sunday

BiCamp 1996 at the Red Brook Mill National Forest in Southern Vermont. Join dozens of other bi and bi-friendly people for a fun weekend of camping, fresh water and beautiful wilderness. Sliding scale fee is \$15 - \$35. Call (617) 424-9595 for more info. or send check payable to Wayne Bryant, along with your name, address, phone # and email address to: Biversity Boston, 29 Stanhope St., Boston, MA 02116.

August 13 - 18 ♦ Tuesday - Sunday

1996 Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Music, workshops, a crafts bazaar, movies and videos. Tickets range from \$40 - \$250 according to number of days attending. Info: Send Stamped, self-addressed envelope to WWTMC, Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458.

Missed the Deadline??

Aren't Inspired by the Topic?

WRITE ANYWAY!!

This is your newsletter. Articles on any topic are welcome!

Letters, poems, black-and-white artwork, doodles, jokes, experiences, ideas....

See page two for submission guidelines, or leave a message at the office for anyone on the Editorial Team.



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The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. For info call (617) 424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st Tuesdays and 3rd Thursdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group meets 7:30 - 9 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday and 3rd Thursday of each month. 1st Tuesday location is at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge. 3rd Thursday location varies. Call (617) 354-8807 for info and Thursday locations.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm, at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston (in the same building as the bi office). Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

June 2 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. First hour's topic: "your first same-sex partner." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. Bispaces takes place 7-9 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

June 3 ♦ Monday

"All God's Children," a film about gay, lesbian and bisexual life in the African-American community, will be shown at 7 p.m. at the Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline. Director D. Moschbacher will present the film. Tickets are \$10 and proceeds from the event will be donated to Women Vision Inc. to fund further distribution and promotion of the film.

June 5 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Small donation requested to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info (617) 424-9595.

June 7 ♦ Friday

BBWN Pre-Pride Party at Ellyn's near Davis Square in Somerville at 7 p.m. T accessible. Food will be provided. We'll be making signs for the Pride Parade, so bring your ideas. Info and directions: (617) 629-2727. All women welcome.

June 8 ♦ Saturday

Annual Bi Pride Brunch. Celebrate Pride with your community! 9 - 11:30 a.m. at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., across from the park at Copley Square. \$4-10 sliding scale.



Boston Pride Parade

Show your bisexual pride by marching in the 26th Annual Pride Parade, which starts at noon at Copley Square. Ask where the "29 Stanhope Street groups" will be starting from if you can't find us. BBWN will be part of that group.

June 9 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. What's Pride weekend without a night of hot dancing with women? End your Pride holiday the right way - upstairs at 212 Hampshire St.,

Inman Square, Cambridge. 7-11 p.m.

June 12 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people.

June 13 ♦ Thursday

Bisexual Resource Center Volunteer Night. 7:30 p.m. Come to this training or leave a message for Liam at (617) 424-9595 to learn how you can help the BRC educate others on bisexuality. We need office volunteers for each Tuesday and Thursday night.

June 14 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. Meet at The Casual Cup, 1362 Beacon Street, Brookline, for caffeine, conversation and live music. Nearest T stop is Coolidge Corner, on the C branch of the Green Line. Sponsored by Biversity Boston, the area's mixed gender, bi social network.



June 15 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Picnic Brunch. 11 a.m. Meet at the Bandstand on the Boston Common. Nearest T stops are Park Street on the Red and Green Lines and Boylston on the Green Line.

Freedom Trail Walk. After the picnic, brunch-goers will leave from Boston Common and walk as much of the Freedom Trail as people are up for.

June 16 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Bowling. Meet at Games & Lanes, Route 2 in Arlington, near the Alewife T stop on the Red Line at 2 p.m. Call Heidi at (617) 782-4235 for info.

June 18 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see June 5th)

June 19 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Planning Meeting. Come with your ideas and your energy. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. All women welcome.

June 22 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Potluck Bruch at noon at Fennel's in Brookline. Join us for a festive summer celebration. T accessible. For info and directions, call (617) 734-4636. All women welcome.

June 30 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch. A feast of Indian fare at the Indian Globe Restaurant, 474 Mass. Ave. in Central Square, Cambridge. Take the Red Line to Central Square.

CALENDAR continues on page 11



MARCHERS AT PRIDE WITH THE NEW BBWN BANNER

PHOTO BY ELLYN RUTHSTROM

The Politics of Pride

By Ellyn Ruthstrom

This year's Pride March in Boston certainly had its share of controversy, with people discussing the events and their aftermath weeks after the floats and banners were stowed away until next year. In listening to many different people's reactions to the march, I realized that my own conflicting feelings about Pride had started long before Mayor Menino and his police color guard headed down Boylston Street on June 8. I have no profound answers to the questions that I may raise, but I thought I would bounce a few ideas around for our bi community to ponder.

Last year was the first year that a Dyke March was held in Boston, with the group gathering at Ruggles Station and entering into the larger march in front of the Boston Public Library. It was incredibly moving to see hundreds of queer women flood into Copley Square chanting "Pride is Political." This year the issue of whether to participate in the Dyke March or not became much more significant because its organizers decided they would not feed into the larger march because it was not political enough.

This is where my own conflicts begin to surface. The Boston Pride March is now the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Allies Pride March. I am now visible as a bisexual in this march. That is, at least when the full name is used, which isn't often. This omission was particularly startling when in a

Pride continues on page 5

The Election or Sojourner Truth vs. The Dick Army

by Marcia Deihl

It's national presidential voting time, girlfriends. Are we having politics yet? The local fem-rock group the Girlillias used to sing a parody of "Let's Get Physical" called "Let's Get Political." When I say "political," I think civil rights marches, women's liberation, street theater, pro-choice demonstrations, L-B-G-TRS (pronounced, "albigators") Pride marches, and monthly Cambridge Lavender Alliance meetings. When my niece says "political" she thinks about Democratic and Republican white male grown-ups in Washington, D.C. No wonder there's a communication problem across the generations. And yet we boomer feminists are the age of Bill and Hillary Clinton.

"Where Have You Gone, Sojourner Truth? A nation turns its lonely eyes to you, ooo ooo ooo." Sojourner Truth's "And Ain't I A Woman?" speech inspired the title of my old New Harmony Sisterhood Band's album. She was an eccentric, articulate, and tireless African-American single mother of thirteen children born into slavery who fought for all human rights and saw no reason to choose between race and gender and class.

The Election continues on page 6

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Volunteers of the Month



Deborah Levine

Val

Fennel

Ellyn

Rebecca

Debbie Block-
Schwenk

Rachel

Tanya

Laura

Anada

'tina

And many more
wonderful women!
You know who
you are! Thank
you, thank you,
thank you!

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this
issue of BiWomen:

Linda Blair

Debbie Block-Schwenk

BBWN Financial Statement

Jan. 1, 1996 - June 30, 1996

Balance forward 1/1/96: 3663.02

Expenses

Printing 2108.13

Postage 146.79

Advertising 75.00

Merchandise purchased 88.36

Postal fees 85.00

Pride expenses 146.35

Misc. (taxi) 6.10

Total expenses 2655.73

Income

Dues 1257.79

Advertising 110.00

Merchandise 264.40

Bank Interest 18.97

Coming Out Gp. 180.00

Total income 1831.16

Balance as of 6/30/96: 2838.45

Net change in 1995: (964.42). Net change 1st
half of 1996 (824.57).

Notice to membership: IT'S TIME FOR A
FUNDRAISER -- PLEASE COME TO THE
BBWN STEERING CTTE MEETING ON
AUG. 21ST.

Submitted by Robyn Ochs, Treasurer for
BBWN

Join the BBWN phone list!!

Leave a message at the office with
your name and phone number if you
want to be reminded of upcoming
events or events that didn't make it
into the calendar.

(617) 424-9595

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Coming in *BiWomen*:

The Theme for the Oct./Nov. issue:

MEN

DEADLINE for the Oct./Nov. issue:

August 30, 1996

UPCOMING: The theme for the
December/January issue is **EROTICA**

Please provide submissions on paper
(typed or handwritten) or on disk
(PC or Mac). Include your name and
phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published,
please tell us. Otherwise, we may assume
that you do not mind being listed as a
contributor. You may contribute
anonymously, or use just your first name.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
black-and-white art, news and views to:

BiWomen

P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA 02140

Steering committee minutes: 6/19 meeting.

Attending: Julie, Ellyn, Deborah, Linda, 'tina

Deborah, who co-facilitated BBWN's six
week long coming out group for women this
spring, reported briefly on its success. Over-
all, the group went very well, so well that the
participants have continued to meet regularly
on their own since the facilitated sessions
ended on May 15. Deborah agreed to write a
short article about the experience for a future
newsletter and recommended organizing an-
other series of sessions for the fall/winter.

Linda reviewed the upcoming Oct./Nov.
and Dec./Jan. newsletter themes. Body Im-
age was suggested as a possible theme for the
February/March 1997 issue.

The group also reviewed where copies of
BiWomen are currently being distributed lo-
cally and brainstormed additional locations
where we could drop off future issues. Cur-
rently, distribution of copies to local book-
stores, the Fenway Community Health Cen-
ter and other places is sporadic and depends

Meeting continues on page 3

Letters



Dear Bi Women,

I am writing to relate that when *Paramour*, the erotic journal for which I am senior editor, offered to host a reading of sexy fiction and poems at New Words Bookstore, we were refused on the grounds that their clientele is largely lesbian. Lesbians, we were told, would not be interested in work which was pansexual: that is, writing which featured bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgendered and straight representations.

Never mind that lesbian fantasies and practices often include sex with men or that the cutting edge of lesbian erotica (as realized by Pat Califa, Carol Queen, or Trish Thomas for example) features "Daddy" sex, dildo action, and other types of "masculine" masquerade. Never mind that readers who identify as lesbian certainly enjoy representations of sex which are not politically correct.

Let me add that New Words sells *Paramour* and thus realizes a profit for every issue of the magazine they sell.

I'm not asking for a boycott or a battle: feminist bookstores need and deserve our support. But perhaps a little education is in order, and I would appreciate whatever help *BiWomen* readers have to offer. If you believe bifriendly porn belongs in women's space, let New Words know.

Sincerely,

Senior Editor

Paramour

P.O. Box 949

Cambridge, MA 02140

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Insights From a Newly Out Bi Woman

For nearly the past two years, I have been having more and more trouble with people who have trouble with people living in ways *they* can't, or *won't*, understand and so condemn that lifestyle in the name of religion.

I mean, those people who cannot seem to wrap their minds around the fact that they *don't* know *everything* about everything really bug me!

What is so "morally bankrupt," to use their words, about lesbians, homosexuals and bisexuals, anyway? It's *just* a different lifestyle, NOT *the end of the free world*!

What gives "The Moral Moronity" the right to decide what the fundamentally acceptable lifestyle is? I personally don't believe in God, but if I did, I would choose to believe in a God who loves everyone, no matter what their sexual preference might be!

Jade Crabtree

Mississippi

Meeting from page 2

on if anyone at the mailing agrees to deliver them. Deborah suggested that having a "diva" to coordinate distribution would help to ensure that extra copies were delivered more reliably. If you'd like to volunteer for the job, please call the office at (617) 424-9595 and leave a message for Linda or email her at lindab@shore.net.

Everyone agreed that this year's pre-pride pizza and sign-making party (which brought together over 20 bi women and our lesbian friends and allies!) was a big hit. Special thanks to 'tina for making a *fabulous* new BBWN banner for the pride parade!

Ellyn reported on the National Women's Studies Association Conference which she attended in New York recently. Although she connected with several other bi women there, only two of the papers presented mentioned bisexuality or the bi community. Unfortunately, she got very little support and a fair amount of open hostility when she addressed the lack of inclusion publicly. Steering committee meeting attendees discussed how to address similar issues in the future and agreed that BBWN should continue to discuss how to encourage inclusion and confront biphobia in similar settings.

Ellyn suggested that BBWN schedule a discussion, possibly following a brunch,

Meeting continues on page 7

Biversity Web Page

Biversity Boston - the mixed gender bisexual network of greater Boston - wishes to announce its presence on the World Wide Web. The current content includes the Biversity Calendar, a list of other bi events in the Boston area, contact information, and a list of useful resources. Like all web pages, it will continue to grow (especially with the addition of some fun pictures). The URL for the biversity web page is:

<http://www.norn.org/pub/other-orgs/brc/biversity>

So check it out, and add a link.

More On-line Resources:

An e-mail list for the male partners of bi women now exists. To join the BiFem Male Partners list, send a subscription request to bfmp-list-request@theseus.ultranet.com. For info contact

at

"The Bisexual Options" Web page is now up and running. Established by bisexual researcher and author Fritz Klein and James Weinrich, the page features links to other bi resources and individuals. Visit it at <http://www.adnc.com/web/fritz/>

The Australian Bisexual Network is also now on the web at <http://www.txdirect.net/users/bnsa/binetaus.html>.

FROM THE EDITORS:



SENATOR KERRY WITH BIWOMEN EDITORS LINDA BLAIR (LEFT) AND DEBBIE BLOCK-SCHWENK (RIGHT) AT PRIDE

PHOTO BY WAYNE BRYANT

Hold Your Nose and Pull the Lever

While Bill Clinton is far from perfect, and has disappointed many of us concerned with progressive and civil rights movements, he is nevertheless the better choice for President of the two viable (major party) candidates.

So often we hear that Clinton has done *nothing* for the GLB community; this is not true. Unfortunately, when it came to queer issues that got a lot of public attention, Clinton botched the job, went half-way or let homophobic right-wing rhetoric frame the debate. In less public ways, however, the Clinton administration has made contributions. For example, an executive order removing sexual orientation as a factor in issuing government security clearances will ultimately impact the role of gays in the military as well as making the lives of countless GLB government employees easier. Most importantly, however, the Clinton administration has begun a dialogue with the GLB community which has strengthened significantly over the past four years. This is such a basic accomplishment that it is often overlooked, but no past President has come close to such a level of communication. If Bob Dole is elected, those channels, that voice, will be cut back, probably to nothing.

Finally, the long-term future of the GLB rights movement must be considered. Whoever is president of the United States over the next four years will have the opportunity to appoint at least one, and possibly two or three, justices to the Supreme Court. As we have seen in the deci-

sion overturning Colorado's Amendment 2, the role of the Supreme Court is extremely important. Whether or not pro-gay (or even gay neutral) Justices are appointed in the next few years will impact the fate of the gay rights movement in this country for decades to come.

The right wing is a small minority of the population of this country (there are probably more queers than there are radical right wing followers in the U.S.), but their unity gives them greater impact. Their influence over Bob Dole and the Republican party is frightening. It is not enough to sit out this election as a "protest" against Clinton; vote for Clinton, and be vocal — let him know that the GLB vote has made a difference and that we want to see his positions change. (The right wing will be doing this with Bob Dole, should he win.) In four years, we've started a dialogue with the White House, but if there's a step backwards now it could take many years to regain lost ground.

A word about the Massachusetts Senate race. It is rare to have a contest where both candidates are decidedly pro-gay, and we do not want to diminish the importance of Governor Weld's role, especially in working with queer youth. However, as women and feminists who are also concerned with issues of poverty, employment and welfare, we recommend supporting incumbent Senator John Kerry.

Most importantly, regardless of your party affiliation, vote and get involved! Democracy only works if we do.

Linda Blair

Debbie Block-Schwenk

BiWomen Co-Editors

Note: This article reflects only the opinions of its authors and does not constitute an official endorsement by the Boston Bisexual Women's Network or its Steering Committee.

Teaching Tolerance

As part of their project on overcoming homophobia in the elementary classroom, the Lesbian and Gay Parents Association has produced a 10 minute video entitled "Both of My Moms' Names Are Judy: Children of Lesbians and Gays Speak Out." The video comes with a complete training guide to conduct a workshop for educators and administrators. To order a video or for more info contact: GLPCI, Box 43206, Montclair, NJ, 07043.

Housemates Wanted:

Watertown/Belmont Line.

Bi woman and gay man seek two friendly responsible housemates for a large, beautiful semi-coop household near bus. Has yard and green space nearby.

Share food. No smokers. No furry pets.
Minimal alcohol.

\$400+ Available immediately. Call Ann
at 923-8716.

AMENDMENT 2 OVERTURNED

By Heidi L. Vanderheiden

On May 20, the Supreme Court overturned an amendment to Colorado's constitution that would have made state laws protecting gay rights invalid, and prohibited similar future laws. Amendment 2, adopted by referendum in 1992, would have prohibited actions by the local government designed to protect gay men, bisexuals or lesbians. The amendment defined these categories in terms of sexual behavior, i.e., lesbians are women who sleep only with women.

The state argued that Amendment 2 simply denied special rights to gays. But, as the Supreme Court said, the amendment actually would have imposed a special disability on homosexuals by denying them the protection from discrimination-related injuries that is allowed to any other group of citizens. It also would have prohibited access to the legal system, which is available even to convicted felons.

"These are protections taken for granted by most people either because they already have them or do not need them," added the Court in its decision. It is unconstitutional and unfair to deny basic protections to a group of people based on a single trait they share. The U.S. constitution is designed to protect the minority from the majority. Neither the majority nor the government must approve of a group of people for that group to be protected. In fact, if that were the case, only an elite few would be protected from discrimination, probably the rich and the powerful.

Given time, society's outlook on groups changes, as do opinions about behavior. Only recently did kissing become regarded as an acceptable sign of affection among unmarried couples. Until then, it was considered a marital privilege, and those who kissed before the proper ceremony was conducted were considered morally (and perhaps intellectually) inferior.

Only by the evolution of civilization will we grow and prosper. The evolution of a society takes place by the questioning of accepted practices, and the increasing tolerance of diversity. The Supreme Court, in overturning the discriminatory and dangerously broad Amendment 2, has ensured that America's evolution can proceed.

Pride from page 1

room full of bisexuals and others gathered to hear Marjorie Garber discuss her book *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life*, the introducer informed the audience of other events planned for Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. I want bis to be out, proud, with banners flying, and marching beside and among the rest of the queer community.

The Dyke March organizers, on the other hand, see the larger march as apolitical, and one of the reasons some feel that is *because* bisexuals and transgendered people are now acknowledged within the march. Some will call me overly sensitive, but enough radical lesbians have told me bis "dilute the meaning of the gay and lesbian movement" for me to feel that their desire to stay apart from the larger march is due in part to bi visibility. (Why MORE people would dilute a movement is beyond me.) So I struggle with the dilemma of becoming more visible while simultaneously being perceived as less political.

Another reason some radical dykes had problems with the Pride March was what they perceived as the over-emphasis on the push for the right to marry for same-sex couples. This position again is problematic for bisexuals. Bis who are involved with opposite sex partners are always accused of asserting heterosexual privilege, especially if they chose to marry. I personally am reluctant to jump on the marriage band wagon. However, there is a great deal of activism right now on the marriage issue, and if bisexuals take a stand against that, it may appear that they are working to maintain this privilege at the expense of gays and lesbians. I also feel that bi communities have not had enough discussion about the marriage issue and the ramifications it might have on our lives and our political activism. (BBWN is planning such a discussion following the brunch on September 29.)

Obviously, individual bi women made their choices this year. Some marched with the Dykes, some walked in the official march, and some did both. These are just some thoughts I wanted to share on my own Pride experience. Let's hear some others.

Queer Store in Framingham

A new store featuring queer-themed art, books, flags, jewelry, etc., opened in June, 1996. Metrowest Inclusions is located in the rear of the Tropic Isle Plaza, Route 9 (280 Worcester Street), Framingham, MA 01710. Call (508) 626-2329 for more info.

Bumper Stickers

Tired of the government dictating whom you can and cannot marry? The following bumper sticker is now available for \$4.00 from Robin, a lesbian from Colorado who says she's fed up with the hate agenda in this country.

"It's none of the church or the state's or your damned business who I marry! Only a tyrant would care!" -RSB

Make your check payable to "RSB" and send it to: RSB, P.O. Box 39238, Denver, CO 80239, or email her for info at ladyrobn@diac.com. For free, she'll email you a graphic she calls her "New Pink Triangle: Don't Tread On Me!" which features a serpent coiled around a pink triangle.

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&
Traditional Approaches

Queer Political Resources

In the Mail:

In Your Face: Political Activism Against Gender Oppression, is a newsletter dedicated "to covering all actions related to overthrowing gender oppression, transphobia, genderphobia, homophobia." Published 2-3 times a year, the newsletter is inserted free in *Anything That Moves* and several transgender publications. You can contact them at: IYF c/o Ricki Anne Wilchins, 274 W. 11st, NYC 10014, or Ricki@pipeline.com. You can also access issues on the web at <http://www.cdspub.com>.

The Bi Centrist Alliance, a Washington, D.C.-based organization, welcomes bisexual men and women interested in "steering a political course that does not veer too far to the Left or Right." If in-

A comprehensive list would fill this newsletter, but if you have an inclination to get involved politically, this list can help you get started. If none of these groups are in your area, your local chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) can be a good place to contact about lesbian and bisexual women's issues.

We cannot vouch for the bi-friendliness of every group or every employee/volunteer in every group. Please let us know if you receive an unfriendly response.

The two non-partisan gay and lesbian political groups in Massachusetts, the Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance of Massachusetts and the Mass Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, held a joint Candidate's Night on Thursday, July 18th. The Mass. Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus will be holding their endorsement night on August 7 at 6:00 p.m. Their telephone number is (617) 262-1565; e-mail MGLPC@aol.com. The Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance of Massachusetts can be reached at (617) 338-GAYS.

The Bay State Gay and Lesbian Democrats can be reached at (617) 536-7551, while the Log Cabin Club of Eastern Mass. (gay Republicans) phone number is (617) 661-2455.

The Cambridge Lavender Alliance can be reached at (617) 868-1693. The Cape Cod Shore Society's phone is (508) 759-5064. The Worcester County L&G Alliance can be reached by calling Jeff at (508) 829-9898.

Gay and Lesbian Labor Activists (GALLAN) are at (617) 522-7156.

Boston Chapter of the National Organization for Women can be reached at (617) 782-1056.

Other New England Groups:

Rhode Island Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights: (401) 521-GAYS

New Hampshire Citizens Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights: (603) 224-1686

National Gay Groups:

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force headquarters in Washington, D.C.: (202) 332-6483. Their Cambridge, MA office number is (617) 492-6393

The Human Rights Campaign headquarters in Washington, D.C., can be reached at (202) 628-4160.

Election from page 1

That famous line was from a 1851 women's suffrage speech in Akron, Ohio. Yet we had to march, get jailed, and be called an "insurrection of 'Amazons'" for sixty-nine more years before we got the vote. Not liberation, mind you, just the vote. If you saw the "American Experience" program on the fight for U.S. women's suffrage, it had to humble and move you, perhaps even enough to show up at the polls this November and vote.

In the words of Helen Keller, noted disability rights activist and less-often noted socialist, the vote may be between "Tweedledumb and Tweedledumber." But consider this year's Republican field: Steve "If You Don't Know the Price of an Election, You Can't Afford One" Forbes, the "Onward Christian Soldier" himself, Pat Buchanan, and the probate contender, Bob "Lesser Evil" Dole. Hence, my little poem: "I'm going off to vote/for Clinton, I suppose/But if I do I'll have to wear/a clothespin on my nose."

I spent many a happy election in my twenties sitting out the whole bourgeois capitalist masquerade or else writing in Lily Tomlin or Pat Paulson or whoever was running on the socialist ticket. I'm no fool; I know that, to paraphrase Susan B. Anthony, "freedom to run for president belongs to those who own the presidency"—i.e., millionaires and PAC-contributors. Today, more than ever, U.S. bipartisan politics are so caught up in the means that the ends are often lost. The means are money, spin-meisters, and the ubiquitous soundtrack of "return to center." The ends? No less than our country's still to-be-fulfilled promise of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

It's enough to make you cry, or laugh. Many of us who are active in grassroots groups eschew mainstream politics. An old comrade half-jokingly accused me of "going mainstream" when I worked for a local city council candidate. Well, if reelecting a civil rights and lesbian-feminist activist lawyer like Katherine Triantafillou is

Election continues on next page

Supporting Woman-Centered Childbirth



- ♦ Information on holistic alternatives
- ♦ Training programs across the U.S.
- ♦ Referrals, books and videos for all pregnant women and their families

A.L.A.C.E.

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Election from previous page

mainstream, I'll sleep OK at night.

The trouble is, those guys on the Hill run our macro-lives, whether we like it or not. Can we bisexual pinko (triangles and diapers) feminists stay snug in our local groups while the right has a rich, fully-networked national organization and a Ralph Reed? We cannot reinvigorate nationally on defensive politics alone, however, so to fill out the big picture, I highly recommend three new reader-friendly books: *The New Field Guide to the U.S. Economy* (Nancy Folbre, New Press, 1995), *Virtual Equality* (Urvashi Vaid, Doubleday, 1995), and *Front Line Feminism* (Karen Kahn, ed., Aunt Lute, 1995). Reading is easier than being force-fed in a jail. Those women, the wild-eyed and the mainstream, marched and fasted a hundred years ago for one simple civil right, the women's vote. It ain't enough but it must be done. Why? Because if we don't, we women will get it bad.

The 1996 gender gap includes but extends way beyond the "Cult of True Womanhood" (peace, children, domestic moral responsibility). Women's national issues have been forced back to bread rather than roses these days. If we do nothing about national politics, 1) women with kids who've lost AFDC will have to choose between homelessness, a battering partner or prostitution because "workfare" pays poverty wages without childcare. 2) Uninformed teenage kids will contract the HIV virus, half because they feel immortal like we did, and half because they don't really care if they die. 3) Huge negative disparities between educational opportunities, incarcerations, and infant mortality rates for African-Americans, Latinos, Asians and Native Americans versus middle class whites will continue to widen. 4) The mainstream media's quick-hit conservative sensationalism will thrive on pitting white feminists against African-Americans, culturally and economically (witness the O.J. Simpson trial and the classist demonization of all rap music). 5) Scapegoating of the poor and immigrants will worsen, as white

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folks become the minority. 6) Fat multi-national corporations will downsize as Wall Street thrives. 7) The "one eyed shrew of the heterosexual dollar" (Ginsberg) will continue to consume the arts. 8) Abortion rights and affirmative action, once a given, are in danger of being rolled back to the 1950's, when men were men and women were men's. Not a pretty picture, oh?

Take heart. The Dick Army, made up of those shiny new GOP boys on Capitol Hill (not to be confused with Dick Armey, R-Mars) is starting to trip over its own feet. Watch how the words "lifestyle" and "p.c." are used and abused in the national conversation and write letters to the editor, to your mother, to your congressperson. And, as a special incentive I will personally send a clothespin to anyone who feels they may need it in November.

(With thanks to the late John Lennon for "The General Election," from *A Spaniard in the Works*, Simon & Schuster, 1965)

Meeting from page 3

where people could share their thoughts and opinions about same gender marriage and discuss whether and to what extent BBWN should be addressing/organizing around the issue.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, August 21 at 7 pm. A review of the organization's finances and the planning of a fall/winter fundraising event will be on the agenda. We need your input, creativity and participation to plan and organize a well attended and successful event, so please mark your calendar and plan to join us! We look forward to seeing you there.

BiNET from page 10

groups and talked about taking leadership in bi organizing and discussed the challenges around leading — especially for women. This year, there will be workshops on rural organizing, as well as fundraising, the media, and fighting the radical right.

BiNet USA is also responsible for creating a Bisexual Youth Initiative and a press kit (which was instrumental in getting the 1995 *Newsweek* cover story on bisexuality covered). This year's meeting will focus on coalition building within and out of our community. I will certainly share what I learned at the meeting in the next *BiWomen* newsletter.

For more info about BiNet USA, write P.O. Box 7327, Langley Park, MD 20878. Or call Kirsten at (802) 658-9554.

from previous page

interested, contact them at BCA, P.O. Box 2254, Washington, DC 20013-254. They have a recorded message line at (202) 828-3065.

Responding to the GOP

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and local San Diego activists are promoting a progressive response to the Republican National Convention platform in San Diego from August 11-15, 1996. The response will include a National Queer Youth Speak Out on August 13, where young people will address the impact that the policies and politics of our administration have on them, and respond to the youth policies in the Republican platform.

FORCE is a group of "students, artists, intellectuals, workers and media activists" working to ensure that Bob Dole does not become the next president of the United States. Through publicizing a series of vivid, visual images, they want to promote divisions within the Republican party and educate the public. You can contact them at Box 3155, Amherst, MA 01004-3155, fax (413) 582-0623, or find them on the World Wide Web at http://hamp.hampshire.edu/~khbf95/Public_html/force.html.

Two-Spirit Gathering

The International Two-Spirit Gathering for Native American gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people will take place in the Seattle, WA, area in August, 1996. For more information, write to Wesley Thomas in care of Two-Spirit Gathering, P.O. Box 85654, Seattle, WA 98145-1654. You can call him at (206) 525-1585 or send e-mail to wthomas@u.washington.edu.

• • • • •

Call For Submissions

I publish a small monthly magazine for lesbians and bisexual women. It is called *CLIQUE Magazine* and we are based in NYC. At present, we are looking for bisexual women who might be interested in writing articles/stories, a monthly column for other bisexual women, etc. Since we are new we can not pay but once we start making money so will our writers.

Please mail submissions and queries to Meadowlark Productions, 81 Pondfield Road, Suite 342, Bronxville, NY 10708, Attn: Margie Graulau. The fax number is 718-652-1928. Thanks for all your help.

Margie

Politics, Same-Gender Marriage, and Biphobia

by Debbie Block-Schwenk

There are two bills that affect queer people currently being considered at various levels by the US Congress. DOMA, the "Defense of Marriage Act" passed the House of Representatives on July 12th by a vote of 342-67. This bill would define marriage for purposes of federal law as "between a man and a woman" and would give states the ability to not recognize same-gender marriages performed in other states.

As of this writing, the US Senate is likely to take up DOMA in September. Only seven Senators have announced their opposition to the bill, including both Senators from Massachusetts. President Clinton has announced he will sign the bill.

Even worse than the presence and probable passage of this divisive and useless bill is the biphobia used as arguments for it. Recently, the bi magazine *Anything that Moves* published a report on the DOMA hearings in the House Judiciary Subcommittee from an anonymous source in DC: "Rep. Bob Inglis (R-SC) brought up the hypocrisy of same-gender marriage advocates. Gay rights advocates, he went on to say, don't believe in polygamy so they were discriminating against bisexuals, who 'need' to be married to one man and one woman in order to be satisfied."

According to the report, nobody spoke against these biphobic distortions. *ATM* adds that "Biphobic stereotypes were the lynch pin to their [the Republican's] arguments. To argue effectively for same-sex marriage, bisexual, transgender, lesbian and gay activists must dispute this biphobic nonsense." Bi activists must do more to educate everyone about bi stereotypes and about the many bisexual people who are in monogamous relationships with either an opposite gender or same gender partner.

The second bill in Congress is ENDA, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation. The Republican leadership of the US House refuses to allow ENDA to come to a

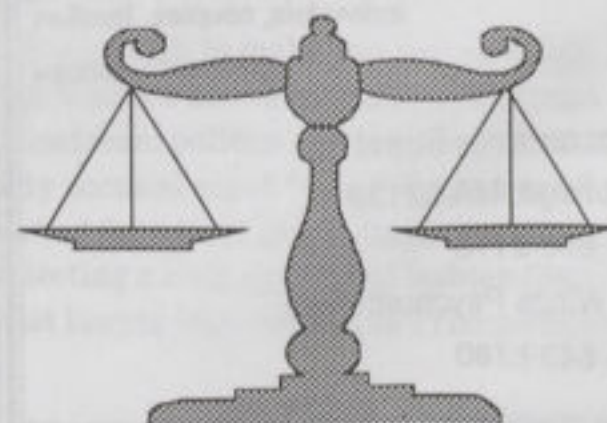
vote, which only emphasizes the hypocrisy of the Republicans. They claim that DOMA is in response to overwhelming public opinion against same-gender marriage but refuse to proceed on ENDA, which also has widespread public support. According to the Human Rights Campaign, 84% of the country opposes job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

To expose this hypocrisy and derail the election-year exploitation of the same-gender marriage issue, the Human Rights Campaign and some US Senators are working to have ENDA introduced as an amendment to DOMA. This strategy will put proponents of the anti-gay bill on the defensive and might be all that is needed to derail DOMA until after the election.

We must counter the right wing's homophobia and biphobia by getting involved. In Massachusetts, Sue Hyde of The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is organizing the Freedom to Marry Coalition; she can be reached at (617) 492-6393. Nationally, contact the Human Rights Campaign at (202) 628-4160.

It is urgent to call your US Senators. In Massachusetts, thank Senators Kennedy and Kerry for their support. In other states, call and write your Senators. Urge them to support the ENDA amendment if it has not yet come to a vote, and urge them to oppose DOMA.

The Hawaii same gender marriage case has just been scheduled to be heard by the Hawaii Supreme Court beginning on September 10, 1996. A rally in Copley Square for that evening is being planned by the Freedom to Marry Coalition. Within a year, it is probable that we will have same-gender marriage legal in one of the fifty US States, but we must not become complacent until the other forty-nine have also followed suit.



BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

Psychotherapy and Consultation

2326B MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02140
617.497.6581

It's My Pleasure

by Lynn Rosenbaum

Is it possible to wear a low-cut dress and enjoy feeling "sexy" without being made to feel like a slut? Is it possible to admire and talk about women's bodies without objectifying them? Can we, as women, feel good about our own bodies while still maintaining our feminist principles?

I set out to answer these questions by gathering together a group of bisexual women to discuss how we can experience sexual pleasure within a feminist context. What follows is a small excerpt from my Master's thesis on this topic. The paper in its entirety is available in the Bisexual Resource Center archives.

One avenue through which some women in the group found sexual pleasure was dancing and being watched while dancing. Two of the women consider themselves "exhibitionists." For "Kim", it is "a real need to be witnessed and a real, I'm -not- invisible sort of thing." When she thinks someone is watching her, it brings her back to the moment, into focus. This brings her erotic pleasure. "Beth" says that she did not always call herself an exhibitionist. She formerly had felt badly about her interest in erotic performance due, in part, to her experience as a little girl. She used to like to dance around, and her mother would say, "you've a little whore in you." This message was derogatory, but it was delivered with a smile, reflecting the mixed messages which women receive about erotically exhibiting their bodies.

Contradictory messages about the ways women should exhibit their bodies can be seen throughout our culture. Erotic dancing has primarily been seen as women dancing for men's pleasure. Men have admired, glamorized and objectified women's bodies. Mainstream culture brands women who exhibit themselves sexually (for anyone other than a non-paying male partner) as a "whore," but it also relishes lavish attention - particularly in the media - on the sexiest, most seductive women. Many feminists have been critical of women's participation in sexually expressive acts on the grounds that they are participating in their own objectification. I found, however, that women's experiences are much more complex.

"Beth" has evolved in her feelings about exhibitionism. She now affirms her enjoyment of erotic dancing, though only in certain all-women's dance clubs. The group participants

agreed that they had different experiences and assumptions about dancing at a "women's club" versus a "straight club." "Janine" said,

...if I'm at a woman's club, I just assume that I'm gonna be respected more. Maybe not by everybody, but it just feels like people will know that I'm more of a person than just this sexual object... [When a woman] is dancing in a women's club, they're really choosing to do it and...the women who are watching and enjoying it - there's been some thought about it... [But] in a straight club...the men just assume that that's what they get...That it's for them. That it's almost expected. The woman is doing it not out of choice so much as what society expects or out of some sort of economic need.

Thus choice, or perceived choice, is a key factor in allowing women to feel a sense of pleasure.

"Beth" discusses how she enjoys both watching and being watched by women.

...That looking and being looked at. To be able to look at and take the male gaze on - I find that very powerful in addition to getting a lot of pleasure out of it.... One of the reasons I don't like having sex with men as much is that they don't want to take on the female role - what's traditionally the female role. They don't want to be watched. I had

Pleasure continues on page 10

Bi Groups in Connecticut

Conn-Bi-Nation is Connecticut's educational, political and social organization for bisexuals and allies. They meet on the second Sunday of the month at 7 PM at the Hartford GLB Community Center, 1841 Broad Street. For more info call Ed at (203) 634-6511 or Jennifer at (860) 232-2643.

Connecticut's Bi Rap is the fourth Sunday of the month at 7 PM at the Hartford GLB Community Center. For more info, call Sarah at (860) 741-6900.

A married men's group in Hartford and a GLB support/coming out group in Waterbury also meet. Contact Edward at (203) 264-5605 for more information.



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The deadline for submissions is September 30th, 1996. Direct inquiries and submissions (three paper copies, diskette, a brief bio and a self-addressed, stamped envelope) to Queer Press, Box 485, Station P., Toronto, ON, Canada, M5S 2T1 or email: luhmann@yorku.ca

Pleasure from page 9

this boyfriend - I'd be like, 'dance for me' and he just couldn't do it...There's more women [than men] who seem to be able to go back and forth between those two things.

"Beth's" description helps us to understand why some settings may allow women to experience pleasure as opposed to objectification. Objectification is an either/or dichotomous way of thinking. In this mode, one element is viewed as an object to be manipulated and controlled. Thus, traditionally, the man as viewer would be the superior subject, and the woman as "viewee" would be the inferior object. "Beth" is seeking the opportunity for fluid roles - where women can shift positions of power and be both the watcher and the watched. The philosopher Michel Foucault describes power as relational. It is not a *thing* but rather it exists between people and runs through all levels of society. Power resides in us - we can not be outside of it. Thus we might think of ourselves in a web of power. It would seem that when one has the ability to *move* easily within this web, the dynamics change and become less oppressive, if not completely unoppressive. Systematic oppression is dependent upon one group always occupying an inferior position and another occupying a superior position. If there is constant movement back and forth, it would seem that the hierarchy of positions would dissolve. Therefore, women dancing at the women's club where they feel that they have the potential, if not the actual experience, to be both the "watcher" and the "watched" may not experience being a "sex object" in the same way as at a straight club where their role is relegated to only one side. Thus we see how the ability to experience pleasure is affected by the power dynamics of gender.

BINET USA

by Kirsten Isgro

The Seventh BiNet USA Annual meeting will be held August 16-18 in San Francisco. BiNet USA is the first and largest national organization for bisexuals in the country. It was formed out of the first nationwide gathering of bisexuals — 75 bisexuals who participated in the 1987 March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights. Currently, BiNet USA has more than 500 paid memberships, many of which are affiliate organizations representing a group of individuals. The mission of BiNet USA is to collect and distribute information regarding bisexuality, to facilitate the development of bisexual community and to work for the equal rights and liberation of all oppressed people.

Last year I went to the Annual Meeting in Minneapolis as the newly elected Northeast BiNet representative. As someone who lives in Vermont, it was useful to hear what more urban bisexual communities are doing. We met in

BiNet continues on page 7

off our backs



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CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

in it. How has this changed over the years? How do you relate to men? How are your attractions to men different from to women? Send articles, calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, book or movie reviews to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

September 1 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. 7-9 p.m. This week's first hour of discussion will be on "How is bi culture different from gay/lesbian culture?" (see August 4th)

September 4 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see August 7th)

September 11 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people interested in the operations of the Bisexual Resource Center. To learn how you can get more involved with the BRC, leave a message for Linda at (617) 424-9595.

September 8 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. Been itching to hit the dance floor? Here's your chance to immerse yourself in the company of other women and dance up a

storm. Upstairs at 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge. 7-11 p.m.

September 13 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. at The Casual Cup, 1362 Beacon Street, Brookline. Spend an evening hanging out with other bi and bifriendly people. Nearest T stop is Coolidge Corner, on the C branch of the Green Line. Sponsored by Biversity Boston, the area's mixed gender, bi social network.

September 15 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Biking Trip through the beautiful suburbs of Lincoln, Sudbury, Wayland and Weston. This 27 mile loop through mostly gently rolling terrain will start from the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln. Gather at 10:15 am near the sculpture with the big ship's propellor. Bring sunscreen, a lunch, plenty of water and a helmet (no negotiating, you MUST wear one.) For info, or to co-ordinate a way for you and your bike to get out to the start of the ride (or if you have room in your car to provide a ride to someone else), contact Mike at (617) 643-7129 or mjl@plattsol.com. Note: Also contact Mike if you'd like to bike out to the start of the ride with him (an additional 14 miles each way).



September 17 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see August 7th)

September 21 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch. 11 a.m. at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Square, Cambridge, directly across from the Davis T stop on the Red Line.

September 24 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night.

Come join us to get the newsletter out. It's a great way to catch up with friends and helps keep BBWN one of the most active bi groups in the country. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office.



September 29 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Bruch and Discussion on Marraige. 11:30 a.m. at Deborah's in Jamaica Plain. Enjoy a leisurely brunch and stimulating conversation with other bi and bi-friendly women. After brunch, Deborah will facilitate a discussion on the pros and cons of same gender marraige. Call Deborah at 522-1628 for info and directions.

Biversity Brunch. 1:00 p.m. Choose from a wide variety of noodle and rice dishes from many countries at Ma Soba, located on the corner of Dunster and Mt. Auburn streets in Harvard Square, Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line.

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The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. For info call (617) 424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st Tuesdays and 3rd Thursdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group meets 7:30 - 9 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday and 3rd Thursday of each month. 1st Tuesday location is at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge. 3rd Thursday location varies. Call (617) 354-8807 for info and Thursday locations.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting, 8pm, at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston (in the same building as the bi office). Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group, 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

August 2 - 4 ♦ Friday - Sunday

BiCamp 1996. If you want to go but haven't registered yet, it may not be too late to join at least 30 other bi and bi-friendly people for a fantastic weekend of camping, swimming and sun-worshipping at Red Brook Mill National Forest in Southern Vermont. \$15 - \$35 sliding scale fee. Contact Wayne at (617) 422-2124 for info.

August 4 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. First hour's topic: "Coming out at work." A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. Bispac takes place 7-9 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

August 7 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info (617) 424-9595.

August 10 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Picnic Bruch in the Public Garden. Pack up something yummy to share and meet us at noon near the statue of Paul Revere on his horse in the Public Garden. If it's raining, show up anyways and we can pick from dozens of great cafe's and restaurants in the area to move our brunch indoors.

August 11 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Outing to Singing Beach. Dig out your pail and shovel and let's head up to Manchester-by-the-Sea for an awesome time. Meet on the North Station Commuter Rail platform (in Boston's North End) at noon to catch the 12:15 train.

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. Dance the night away in the company of other women. Call your friends and get them to join us too. Upstairs at 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge. 7-11 p.m.

August 14 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting, 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. It's never too late or too early to get more involved. The BRC Board helps keep the office running and the community active. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people.

August 17 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch, 11 a.m. at the Blue Diner

on Kneeland Street in Boston. Nearest T stop is South Station on the Red Line. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

Biversity Outing to Randolph Country Club, 12:30 p.m. After brunch we'll leave from the Blue Diner (see above) and car-pool out to this gay country club south of Boston for some fun in the sun. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

August 20 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual, 7-9 p.m. (see August 7th)

August 21 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Planning Meeting. It's time to start replenishing the BBWN coffers and we need your help to do it! Please join us for this extra-important meeting and help brainstorm and plan a fun and effective fall fundraiser. BBWN can only be as active and successful as its volunteer power and member participation allow it to be. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. All women welcome.

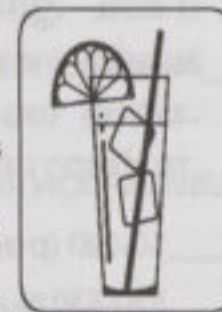
August 24 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Bicycling Trip on the MinuteMan Trail. Meet at 10:30 a.m. on the access road near the bus station at the Alewife T stop on the Red Line. For more info, contact Jonathon at (617) 648-6884 or at urbach@fas.harvard.edu. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

Women's Harbor Cruise with DJ, dancing and cash bar sponsored by Boston Quality Women. \$20 members, \$25 non-members. Send check (made out to BQW) to: BQW, P.O. Box 1051, Watertown, MA 02272, Attn: Harbor Cruise or call Sue at 923-1657 for more info.

August 25 ♦ Sunday

Community Brunch and Mailing Party. Noon. This will be a working potluck brunch at Robyn's near Central Square, Cambridge. The (fabulous) new Bisexual Resource Guide will soon be available for purchase. After stuffing ourselves, we'll be folding, stuffing and mailing order forms to every bi group listed in the guide. Guide sales help support the bi office and strengthen our community, so please come help out. For directions, contact Robyn at (617) 576-1066 or ochs@world.std.com.



August 30 ♦ Friday

BiWomen submission deadline. The October/November issue's theme is "Men". Let us know about the men in your lives and the roles they play

CALENDAR continues on page 11



MAN: ENDANGERED SPECIES?

by Kate Griffin

I love to shock my sister-in-law Jenny. Once I told her that when I was growing up (in the 50's in the South) that no intelligent person wanted to be a girl. Those were the days you've all heard about but probably do not for one second believe ever existed.

Girls waited by the phone for boys to call. Girls couldn't wear pants (jeans hadn't been invented yet) to class on college campuses, and so on.

Meanwhile boys got to smoke cigarettes in public, drive cars (which made a lot of noise with their gutted mufflers) really fast, stay out late, make less on their SATs to get into Carolina (at that time, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), and spit. They also got a lot of attention and admiration for playing baseball or basketball (no football team at my little school.) It seemed unfair.

But, hey, why not learn to smoke, spit, drive fast and play some sport well enough to get kind of honorary status? I tried that formula, almost everything except spitting, and found that it worked pretty well. I got some respect and I did not sit at home on Saturday nights very often. I had caught on to the system and I could make it work. So I did things like pass the Foreign Service Entrance Exam and become a 'diplomat' and so on.

Then feminism came along. I learned that I did not have to do things 'their' way, that 'their way' was not better, just different. I discovered books actually written by women and social theory presented by women and religion(s) with a feminist viewpoint. I kind of stopped paying attention to what the boys were doing, so happy was I to find myself reaffirmed.

I will spare you the details and flip to 1996. Blessed with 4 nephews from 4 to 22 years of age (and no nieces), by necessity I am concerned with the education of boys and what I have discovered is really frightening. In our modern world (and I believe we are in the post-modern world where

Man continues on page 4

On Being a Bisexual Activist: An Interview with Robin Ochs

by Elizabeth West

Robin Ochs dives into activism head and soul first. One of the founders of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network and a member of its predecessor, the BiVocals, Robin continues to be very involved. With the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speaker's Bureau annual training approaching soon and the Bisexual Resource Center urging members of our community to participate, it seemed appropriate to speak with her about how her activism and role as a public speaker about bisexuality began.

I was honored to spend an evening talking with Robin, a self-proclaimed "hyper-activist", at her apartment in Cambridge. We spoke at length about activism and its quirks, her involvement with the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Speakers Bureau, and what she's learned over the years as an out, proud, and visible bisexual activist. What follows are highlights of our conversation.

Could you talk a little about your history as a bisexual activist?

Activism is a lifelong pursuit...spread out over lots of people doing a reasonable amount of work. It's really, really important to remember to pace yourself and not burn out. Stop and make sure you have fun.

Recently, I published an article on biphobia in the (very) newly published anthology: Bisexuality: The Identity and Politics of an Invisible Minority (edited by Beth Firestein, 1996). I'm also coordinating the Second Edition of the Bisexual Resource Guide with the help of 85 national and international volunteers. Last year, I had great fun presenting a keynote address at the International Conference on Bisexuality in Berlin, Germany. And this week I started teaching (once again!) a course on bisexuality at Tufts University.

What lessons have you learned throughout your years as an activist?

I'm just fine the way I am. If someone has a problem with me, I've learned that it's *their* problem, not mine. The best thing I can do is be myself: an out, bisexual woman. I have no time or energy for anyone to question my right to be somewhere. I belong; it's biphobia that doesn't.

How do you view BBWN today, thirteen years after its beginning?

BBWN is in a good place now with a lot of amazing women who've come in to take responsibility for the organization. The positive energy and enthusiasm of women at

Robyn Ochs continues on page 3

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Calendar.....	11,12

Volunteers of the Month



Deborah Levine

Val

Stacia Langenbaum

Emily McCord

Ellyn Ruthstrom

Dinah Moeller

Debbie Hellroski

Rachel

Janet

Rosalie

Kate Griffin

Kathy J.

Claire Morton

And many more
wonderful women!
You know who you
are! Thank you,
thank you, thank
you!

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this
issue of BiWomen:

Linda Blair

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES August 22, 1996

Present: Ananda, Deborah, Ellyn, Kate,
Linda

NEWSLETTER: There was a brief discussion of the number of newsletters to print. The newsletter 'stuffing' is such a well attended event now, that work gets done quickly and everyone seems to enjoy the evening. How subscription renewals could be handled in a more efficient manner was raised and Ellyn and Deborah decided to meet with Gail to discuss the solution.

WOMEN OF COLOR EVENT: Ananda expressed a desire to have another bi women of color event. Everyone was in favor of the event, but as place, cost, and advertising were discussed, once again the question of how decisions get made was raised. Who decides how much money to spend and how can we determine what is a 'good use of limited funds?' Is there a plan for the year so that we can anticipate what funds will be needed.

FINANCES: The discussion about spending led to questions as to whether or not we could accurately trace expenses and as to whether or not we needed a long-range financial plan.

PURPOSE: As we talked of long range, the question was raised as to what 'runs' us? Are we political? Do we have financial stability and exactly what is the definition of that.

Discussing money led to questions about how to raise funds.

ADVERTISING PRICE INCREASED: Those present decided to raise the price of advertising in *BiWomen* from \$10.00 to \$15.00 effective with the next issue.

FUND RAISING MEETING CALLED: While a number of ideas were presented, it was decided to have another meeting devoted only to fund-raising (see page 7). Everyone on the list would be invited to meet on September 5, 1996, from 6-8 at Kate's office at 25 Beacon Street (an economy measure to avoid

Meeting continues on page 7

Coming in *BiWomen*:

The Theme for the Dec./Jan. issue

will be

Erotica

DEADLINE: November 1, 1996

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten), on disk (PC or Mac) or by e-mail (to lindab@shore.net and starfurry@worldnet.att.net. Please submit only text by e-mail. We cannot accept your art or photos electronically.) Include your name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us. Otherwise, we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or use just your first name.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, black-and-white art, news and views to:

BiWomen

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Advertising in *BiWomen* will get your message out to over 700 bi and bi-friendly readers around the world. It's a great way to promote your business and support the newsletter.

Starting with the Dec.96/Jan. 97 issue, *BiWomen* advertising rates will increase from \$10 to \$15 per issue. To advertise in *BiWomen* send your ad to the above address or call (617) 424-9595.

Join the BBWN phone list!!

Leave a message at the office with your name and phone number if you want to be reminded of upcoming events or events that didn't make it into the calendar.

(617) 424-9595

San Francisco Proclaims Bi Pride Day!



The following proclamation was presented at the BiNet USA business meeting in SF by the mayor's liaison to the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender communities on August 17, 1996.

Whereas, San Francisco is proud to be the location for the 1996 annual BiNet USA Business Membership meeting; and

Whereas, BiPOL is the host for this national meeting which will draw participating bisexual rights activists from across the country; and

Whereas, the contribution of bisexuals in developing AIDS service projects, combating discrimination, and advocating for social justice have long been undervalued or discounted by most of society; and

Whereas, this is an opportunity to affirm the dignity and worth of our bisexual friends, family members, parents, children, co-workers, neighbors and partners and to dedicate ourselves to confront biphobia and homophobia in all of its forms; and

Whereas, bisexuality is definitely not just a phase, as so many believe; now

Therefore Be It Resolved, that I, Willie L. Brown, Jr., Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, in recognition of BiNet USA and its historic role of networking bisexuals and their friends across the U.S. in the cause of social justice, do hereby proclaim this 17th day of August, 1996 as...

BISEXUAL PRIDE DAY in SAN FRANCISCO.

Stephanie Berger
BiNet USA National Coordinator
virago@slip.net



All articles and art appearing in this newsletter are copyrighted by the authors and artists.

Robyn Ochs from page 1

BBWN has continued to attract more women with similar energy and passion. I no longer feel I need to participate in BBWN to make it work.

Let's talk about the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Speakers Bureau. Can you tell me a little bit about your involvement?

I joined the Speakers Bureau in 1984 as one of the only two bisexuals on board. Since then, the Bureau has been one of the few organizations where—for the past half-dozen years—I've felt completely welcome. Speaking with the Bureau helps me build, understand, and clarify my history as a bisexual person. I've built up an arsenal of stories about myself to share. It's very validating to have someone else feel you're worth listening to. You discover that you *do* have important things to say.

One of my most memorable speaking engagements was for WGBH executives. They wanted to know, "What do gays, lesbians, and bisexuals want from WGBH?" I wanted stories about say—a local greenhouse owner that would matter-of-factly mention that 'the owner and his partner did such and such' as part of a larger story. I wanted stories portraying men and women who happen to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual as whole, multi-faceted people whose sexual identity is but one part of who they are. I was excited to begin finding some stories in the *Globe* doing just that.

Another very memorable engagement was the time I spoke at the Kiwanis Club of Greater Boston. Afterwards, one woman came up and said to me and my co-speaker, "You two are really nice people even though you are homosexual." She then asked us to join the Cambridge Kiwanis Club.

To get involved in the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Speakers Bureau, please call (617) 450-9776. The Bureau is offering a two-day interactive training on public speaking November 2 - 3. A donation of \$65 (more if you can, less if you can't) is requested to participate. If you are interested in the Bureau, but prefer not to do speaking engagements, volunteers are always welcomed and needed to assist in other areas such as outreach, publishing, and fundraising.

Announcing the new Bisexual Resource Center Web Site

The Bisexual Resource Center (BRC), a non-profit organization in Boston whose mission is to educate the public on bisexuality and facilitate networking within the bi community, is pleased to announce its new web site at: <http://www.norn.org/pub/other-orgs/brc> using web space provided by the Non-Profit Outreach Network. The BRC also maintains the Bisexual Resource List, an electronic list of bisexual and bi-friendly organizations, which can be accessed either through the BRC Web site or directly at <http://www.qrd.org/qrd/www/orgs/brc/brl-toc.html>. Your constructive feedback on the site is welcome and may be sent to the Bisexual Resource Center at brc@norn.org.

Bi Group Forms in Rhode Island

Biversity Providence, a new social group for bisexual and bi-friendly people, is forming in Rhode Island. For more information, call (401) 455-3536.

The Bisexual Resource Center is currently recruiting Boston area bis to attend the upcoming GLB Speakers Bureau Training in November.



This is a great chance to enhance your own skills and help increase bi visibility.

If you're interested, please leave a message for Linda at (617) 424-9595.

WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE: THE RISE OF THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT IN AMERICA

Public Broadcasting Service television stations will air "With God On Our Side: The Rise Of The Religious Right In America" Friday nights at 9 p.m. from September 27-October 18 and November 1-8. The shows chronicle the growth of the religious right from the "Christian anti-Communism" of the 1950s to the sophisticated politics of the Christian Coalition today. The PBS World Wide Web site publicizes the series as an "in-depth and nonideological look at the controversial movement." No matter what your plans are for Halloween, this is likely to be among the most chilling (yet insightful) experiences you could have this fall.

Man from page 1

deconstructionism, feminist theory and multiculturalism have started to force systems to start thinking about real change), boys have been and continue to be denied personhood and are shoved into as strict and narrowly defined roles as girls were in the 50's!

Men have always had to be tough. They could not express any emotion except anger. They had to drink a lot while they were young and die before their wives when they got old. Oh, and of course they were competitive in every thing they did.

The results, when we have the courage to look at the violence against women and the desire to control women's bodies, are not pretty.

Will the post-modern man have the same courage as the feminists of my generation?

Let me tell you a quick story: This summer a young, male medical student was visiting us and joked about his "tan." As a matter of fact, his back was burned in a strange pattern: his shoulders were fine but the rest of his back was burned. Except for two hand prints on either side. Yep, he'd been canoeing with the "fellas" and he'd tried to put suntan lotion on himself because, after all, if you touch another guy, even to put suntan lotion on his back.... How silly.

So, the boxes we, in 'modern' times, put men into are no larger than the boxes we put women into earlier. We see the results all around us. Once again, I pose the question: Will the young men of today have the courage to live full lives as real human beings? Will the post-modern man have the courage to follow in the footsteps of young women who refused stereotypes, broke out of the boxes and began living 'full' lives? And, as women, do we have any responsibility in this process of transformation?

Kate Griffin is the Director of Membership and Communications of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation and a member of BBWN's Steering Committee.

THE RULES OF THE SCHOOLYARD:

Lessons In Success I Have Learned From Working With Men

by Amy Wyeth

At first, I thought that this issue of BiWomen wouldn't be of interest to me as a writer, as romantic involvement with men is not my fortune these days. However, I realized that my life has been significantly affected by relations with men in a different capacity: in the workplace!

In my office in a small nonprofit organization I work closely with four men and to a lesser degree with five other women. My job has put me in closer contact with male coworkers than any I have held in the past.

Several lessons in success, acceptability, and adapting at work have been brought home to me through interactions with my male coworkers. With apologies to Homer Simpson (from whom I got the idea for this piece), I am calling these lessons the "Rules of the Schoolyard." Like the lessons kids learn on the playground, some of these "rules" are useful ideas which carry more weight after I have seen them in action. Others I hate to believe still exist, and will continue to fight in future work situations. All of them, of course, only relate to my own experience at work with men, mostly during the past year. This article is meant as a reflection of my experience which I hope will raise ideas and discussion.

Without further delay, ...

Rules continues on page 10

ALL Bi, MYSELF by Kathrine Douthett



Imagine my surprize

Imagine my surprize, now that I found you,
but you are in a man's body
not a woman's.

Me - such a nice dyke
finding your powerful strong
very male body
soooo hot
as it pushes insistent
straining to enter me.
Me - who never even liked penetration
preferring vibrators on my clit
surprized to be liking to be fucked
hard
by a man
with a cock
not a dolphin-shaped lavender dildo.

Imagine my surprize
last Wednesday waking after a lusty dream
of nuzzling into a woman's breasts
slipping my fingers
one
at a time
into her wet open cunt.
Imagine my surprize
to find my arm draped over a broad hairy chest
and as I slid my face close to yours
to feel stubble on your chin
waiting to be shaved, later.

I haven't shaved my legs in 10 years,
and won't start now.
You don't want me to,
shave
or change
in order to be with you.
You said you didn't need me to be heterosexual
only needed me to
love you.
Imagine my surprize.
I do.

4 Some

by [REDACTED]

I can see you holding him
In your strong arms
The same way you hold me
Only more hidden

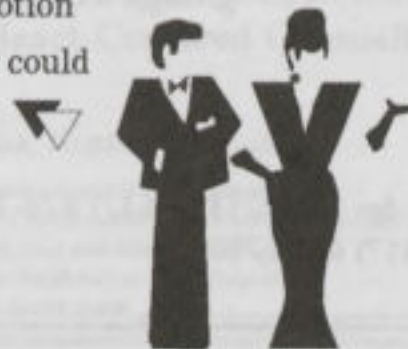
When you kiss him
I know it can not feel the same
As kissing a woman
Whose flesh speaks
And whose eyes have known suffering
All their days

I touch her shoulder
And it gives way
Like a crumbling wall
Between her mask and her mind

Does he give way?
Is he ever trying to prove strength?
Will he let you get inside him
Filling each hole
With your flesh
No invasion
But a blending
Both container
And contained

Her arms are a shield
Great mighty Athena
Who plots to be
Victorious
Who hides me in her Parthenon
In the great city
Beyond her ego

What are his arms to you?
Soft folds of tan indulgence
A safe place
To expose your emotion
In a way you never could
With me.



New Book Explores Sexual Orientation

Beyond Gay or Straight: Understanding Sexual Orientation is a new book by Jan Clausen which explores how sexual categories developed through history and how our current definitions relate to old ideas about sex and nature. The book includes discussion of the significance of sex and its relationship to gender across cultures and through time. The book is part of the "Issues in Lesbian and Gay Life" series published by Chelsea House Publishers, 1974 Sproul Road, Suite 400, P.O. Box 914, Broomall, PA 19008-0914, (610) 353-5166



Around the World

We recently recieved a copy of Israel Update, the newsletter of The Society for the Protection of Personal Rights for Gay Men, Lesbians & Bisexuals in Israel (SPPRI). They can be reached at 28 Nahmani Street 61375 Tel Aviv P.O.Box 37604.

Call for Volunteers

radical femme productions, a production company founded by a bisexual woman filmmaker, is looking for volunteers to help with producing *The Edge*, a film about a photographer who is struggling to "come out" as a bisexual and as an artist. If you're interested in being in the film or helping with the crew, you can contact her at radical femme productions, 19 Ricker Terrace, Newton, MA 02158, or e-mail her at RadicalFem@aol.com.

Tiresias

by Jan Steckel

His face was a wall I passed daily and gave no notice,
innocent of the exotic mind behind it.
One day the wall gapped open, and I glimpsed green.
Ever since I've searched with blind hands to find that gate again.

*Shatter glass and sparkle, semiprecious mortal loves
bacchanal of asceticism
those hypogonadal Div School boys
want their madonnas to reive their senses from them.*

He might have taught me to love beauty for beauty's sake,
had I not found his soul more moving still:
focussing light, a crystalline heart
through which thought streamed unadulterated.

*Your cool blue early period pieces
you untried saplings
I will step into your breach
your terror and your sweet dream
make you move to music you can't hear yourself
I will undo you.*

Deaf to intonation and inflection,
he was born with clear eyes
so that he alone could see

the patterns in gravel that turn sand to glass

*Uisgebaugh, the grape, the rye
the bursting of neurons
and all those angels dancing on one electrode
the lines of combination emanating from one
nitrogen blue nidus
a countable infinity*

I should have been born a son of scholars and barrel-chested peasants,
except I was made Tiresias, to recognize him.
Though he will see the face of God,
it is I who know the heart of man.
I will be taken back to my fathers,
held close to their chests,
while he has no father on earth in whose arms to die.

*So light her touch
so soft her tongue
blue-veined ankles
vellum skin
cover her mouth with yours
pin her to the sheets
unleash in her the riot in you
make her feel what you feel
make her twist under your hand
till she bursts like a muscat
with a sweeter taste than summer*

On the day I step from the balcony,
on the day I yield to the sea,
I will remember (beast that I am)
I was more of a man than he.

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Bisexual Men

by [REDACTED]

I have had sex with a number of bisexual men over the past five years since I came out as a bi woman. How is that the same and different than doing the same or similar activities with heterosexual men, or with gay men, or with women of any persuasion (not to mention transpersons...). Here are some of my thoughts:

There is a certain heat that comes from knowing a man also desires other men. A heat that is the closest I can get to being a man loving other men. A heat I like to play with. I enjoy watching and fantasizing and hearing tales of hot man-to-man fucking and sucking and wrestling around. I like to think that when a bi man is playing so carefully (or not) with my ass he is also remembering what it is like to have a man play carefully (or not) with his. That he knows what it is like to be fucked and likes it.

The part of me that is attracted to men is attracted to the part of bi men that is attracted to men.

Bi men are fun and ... a bit on the androgynous side. Sexually experienced. Well, fun, willing to try things out. They are maybe a bit jaded. Unsure about what women want perhaps. Willing to do things a little out of the ordinary.

Sex with a bisexual man is like and unlike sex with anyone else. I find myself trying to categorize and catalogue those men together and compare and contrast to my other lovers over the years. How are they the same? Are they as alike as one might think?

One is totally sold on safe sex - latex to the max. Another is into gentleness. I spent an evening at a party lying naked with a different bi man telling fantasies hot enough to sizzle my sweat but never "really" having sex. I've had phone sex with a bi male professional colleague with whom I have upon occasion had sexual encounters. He offered to write me a sexual fantasy if I told him some thoughts about what is hot. He and I talked and thought and giggled and played. Will we get together to play again? Probably. Does it matter that he is bisexual? Sure. Or maybe not.

Are they all the same in the dark? I guess not. They seem to be just as different from each other as anyone else.

Bi men, gotta like 'em.

I could say that some of my best friends are bi men. Yah, but would you want your sister to marry one? Nah. I don't think she's ready to handle it.

Meeting from page 2

paying for a room at the Living Center.)

Notes submitted by Kate.

Fundraising Meeting September 5, 1996

Present: Kate, Ellyn, Linda, Deborah, Debbie, Ann

Options for fundraising events were discussed. Among these are a benefit night at Ryles, a dance party run entirely by BBWN, and a letter to people on our mailing list asking for donations. Other ideas such as raffles and bake sales would be held in conjunction with a major event.

The pros and cons of a dance at Ryles versus a private dance were discussed, but it was decided more information was needed. People were assigned to research things such as possible locations for a dance, sources of donated food, and how successful Ryles events have been in the past. Reports will be made on Sept. 24th at the newsletter stuffing.

Kate will be drafting a letter asking for donations, which will be sent out sometime this fall.

We also had an idea for a New England-wide afternoon or weekend for bi women who might not be able to attend an evening event as a community building idea for the spring.

Notes submitted by Debbie

We are still looking for IDEAS and VOLUNTEERS for fundraising events this fall. If interested, attend a steering committee meeting, speak to a member of the steering committee at a BBWN event, or leave your name and number at the Bi Office. Thanks!

Internet Resources for
Men Partnered with Bi-
sexual Women

The Spouse Support Mailing List is a moderated Internet mailing list (also available in digest form) for straight spouses and their bisexual, gay or lesbian partners. Membership is confidential.

To subscribe send a mail message to majordomo@texsys.com. In the message body, include the following: subscribe spouse-support or subscribe spouse-support-digest

The BiFem Male Partners is an e-mail list for the male partners of bi women. To join send a subscription request to bfmp-list-request@theseus.ultranet.com. For info contact Stephanie Doss at steph@ultranet.com.

Married Women's Support Group

A bisexual married women's group for those women married to or in committed relationships with men meets once a month at the Boston Living Center. For information, call Debbie at (617) 731-9060.

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Support Disney

After Disney's decision earlier this year to extend health benefits to same gender partners of its employees, the Southern Baptist convention voted to boycott Disney products and theme parks. The group also objected to some gay and lesbian-themed events held at Disney theme parks and to some adult-themed movies produced by Disney subsidiaries.

In return, some G/L/B activists are asking members of the community to support Disney by buying their products and writing to Disney itself. Contact Michael Eisner, Chair, The Walt Disney Company, 500 S. Buena Vista Street, Burbank, CA 91521. Telephone 818-560-100, fax 818-560-1930.

Out On the Job

DEC Open to Bi Concerns

This summer, E. Grace Noonan, a customer service representative at Digital Equipment Corporation, was asked to participate in an interview designed to get feedback from gay, lesbian and bisexual employees at DEC. The text of her interview is printed below.

1) How long have you been employed by Digital?

I was a DECtemp for just over 5 years, then I got hired as a permanent employee in June of 1995. I started as an administrative assistant, and now I cover the customer service helpline desk on the 3rd shift. I'm also responsible for keeping all of the systems on the site up and running at night.

Anyway, as a DECtemp, I had to be terminated every year for a set amount of time, so I would guess I now have a total of approximately 5 years here.

2) Are you "out" to management? If not, why?

I did come out to my supervisor in January of this year. It wasn't a *tremendous* surprise to her, as I had requested that I be allowed to host a support notesfile on one of our systems, and I had mentioned things about the treatment of lesbians and gays in my religion. But I think she assumed that if I wasn't straight (strate? het?), then I was a lesbian. Most people do seem to assume there are only two possibilities.

3) Are you "out" to the entire or part of your workgroup?

hmmmm..well, I haven't come out in so many words to the whole organization. I have come out to about 1/3 of the people within CSD, and maybe some others in the larger organization.

4) Could you include a partner/date in outside workgroup off-site social activities and both be comfortable?

I don't really know. First, I don't have a partner, so it doesn't come up. Second, because of my work schedule (both here and in the theatre), I really do not have any opportunity to go to any of the get-

togethers. In fact, I don't think I've been to one yet.

5) What was the best, and what was the worst experience you have had at work when someone found out you were bisexual?

Well, my boss was very cool and just said that's fine. She was concerned for me and for my safety. Which also makes it the worst because I really wish that had not even had to be a concern.

Most of the people in the group have been fine with it, at least to my face. However, I have heard that some things have been said during the day. I guess my last show (done for a lesbigay theatre, in which I played the lead lesbian) was being discussed, and people were saying things about "is that the lesbian thing she's doing?" and "well, you know E, she's *different*". All said with lots of rather sophomoric laughter. But I also know that another woman in the group told them to shut up. It is a small group, and we work in a closed room, so everybody comes up for harassment.

They *were* all supportive when my performance in that play was savaged in the Boston Phoenix. And they all seem to like me. Most of the time.

6) Given that the workplace was safer for you, would your productivity be greater?

I don't feel unsafe. There are a lot of people here who actually have a lot of respect for me and for my abilities and drive. My name is offered as someone who can take on projects. Most of them wonder how I do as much as I do. So, all things considered, I feel quite comfortable. I don't know how I would feel if I had a female partner and wanted to include her in conversations. But I have mentioned my ex, and there has been no backlash.

I mean, I have sent out work related mail messages a couple of times and forgotten to delete my .sig [an e-mail "signature" at the end of a message, often including a favorite quote -- Ed.], and the only thing that was ever said was that I should learn to spell. Then I had to explain my whole spelling thing with actor, actress, and acter (aren't you just dying to know, now?)

This is the .sig:

> E Grace Noonan

> e.noonan@hlo.mts.dec.com

>I'm an acter, a computer geek and a Quaker for heaven's sake! How much queerer can I get?!

DEC continues on next page

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DEC from previous page

7) What is the one perception about being bisexual that others have that you would like to see changed?

That it is all about genitalia. That it has anything to do with "one of each". There are many bi folk who are polyamorous, and there are many who are monoamorous. One is an orientation, the other is a way of life.

I'm bi. That simply means that I can be attracted to a person without consideration of their gender. I, personally, find men and women of equal attraction; many bi people are more attracted to one gender than the other. We are all individuals.

But I really resent the question "Well, what if you were with a woman, in a committed relationship, and you met a man you really liked?". That has nothing to do with my orientation, and everything to do with my lifestyle. I am a monogamous (okay "monoamorous", since I'm not married) person. If I were involved with someone and met a *person* that I found attractive, I would not get involved with them. It doesn't matter if it was a member of the opposite gender than my current partner, or the same gender.

Some bi people do feel they need "one of each" to be complete. I feel that the person is what is important, not their gender. Yes, there are differences between men and women, but there are differences between all people. It all boils down to people thinking that bisexuality is an activity, or a choice, and not an orientation. Being bi is just as much a part of who I am as is being an actor (no that is not a typo, but that is a story for another day), or my hazel eyes, or my freckles.

I have a button. I don't wear it, because it has a somewhat negative attitude. But I bought it because sometimes I get so frustrated with the stereotypes of bisexuals. *Especially* of bisexual women. If I am with a woman, it really *isn't* for the pleasure of a man! Anyway, it says "I'm bisexual and I'm not attracted to you". There are days when just knowing I have it can bring a smile to my face.

I've been married (legally) to a man. I've been married to a woman. As far as I was concerned, both of those were life commitments. I didn't become heterosexual when I was married to my husband, and I didn't become a lesbian when I was married to my wife. I was still exactly as I have always been; a bisexual woman.

8) If there was one thing that you would like to see Digital change for the community, what would that be?

I would like Digital to acknowledge that gay people (and I am grouping lesbians, gay men and bisexual women and men in that category) *do* form families, that we *do* form life partnerships, that we *do* want to share in the responsibilities as well as the rights and rewards that society grants to heterosexual marriages and family units.

As a bisexual woman, I see this in a somewhat unique way. A heterosexual's marriage and family is going to be accepted no matter what. A gay man's or lesbian's marriage and family is *not* going to be accepted no matter what. And the acceptance of *my* marriage and family is dependent on whether or not I'm "lucky" enough to fall in love with someone of the appropriate gender.

9) What does Pride mean to you?

Pride means accepting that we are all important. That we are all doing the best we can to survive in this world. It means being willing to accept people's stated motives for the way they live. It means not saying someone isn't "gay enough", or that a bisexual person who happens to be involved with someone of the opposite gender is "passing", and "sucking up heterosexual privilege."

It means believing that we are just as well loved by whatever deity in which we may believe. It means believing that we are just as good as, not better than and not worse than, any one else on this earth. And it means being certain enough of our similarities to revel in our diversity.

10) Any feedback that you think should be addressed that was not, please include here:

Hmmm. I think you covered it pretty well. I hope I've been clear and managed to get my viewpoint across. I do not speak for all bisexual people, by any stretch of the imagination. No one does. I speak for *me*. But I hope that what I have said speaks to someone else's condition (a Quaker phrase that rather elegantly and simply states the concept of my words touching something in someone else, and putting that something into words).

Thank you for asking me to do this.

Boycott in North Carolina

Members of Citizens Against Discrimination are urging the film and TV industries and others to boycott Rutherford County, North Carolina, a lush and diverse area used in the filming of many movies, because of a recent resolution by the Rutherford County Commissioners condemning homosexuality in all its forms. For more information, contact Citizens Against Discrimination, P.O. Box 519, Edneyville, NC 28727.



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SF Group Protests Tobacco Targeted at Queer Community

The San Francisco G/L/B/T SmokeFree Project, started by Bob Gordon to expose how the tobacco industry is going after the gay community, has been working to convince merchants to post less cigarette advertising and to try to remove some of the billboard advertising in the Castro district of San Francisco.

"With all the tobacco advertising temptations out there, it's important to keep in mind that every time we buy a pack of Marlboros, our money goes straight to Philip Morris and then right into the pockets of Jesse Helms," SmokeFree Project advocate Ken McKellar told the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* in a recent article.

For more information on the SmokeFree Project, call Bob Gordon at (415) 487-4333

Rules from page 4

RULE #1: *Don't say anything unless you're sure everyone agrees with you.*

Peer pressure to adapt to my coworkers' views—often initially espoused by one of the men among us—is strong. When I was the only one out of ten with a publicly stated difference of opinion on a location for a work retreat, I felt like I was seen as unreasonable. I stuck with my opinion, which would have required less transportation hassle, but felt the pressure to change the retreat option. In fact, I saw another female coworker, who had initially agreed with me, capitulate to this pressure.

RULE #2: *Laugh and the world laughs with you...*

....cry and you'd better be pretty careful in your confidants. Everyone would rather laugh than cry. I have become acutely aware of the necessity of finding humor in situations I haven't found funny in the past—in large part because that is how my male supervisor handles conflicts. Though I don't think this is always the best approach, I have seen that he is in a position superior to mine at work, so clearly, others above both of us think it's a good strategy.

I saw this rule in action during a recent serious disagreement I had with a female coworker over the merits of cats vs. dogs. My supervisor happened to be in the room at the time of the conflict and felt he should say something humorous about the situation (which it probably deserved). I did not appreciate his intervention at the time, but in retrospect it probably helped the argument from deteriorating further.

RULE #3: *A woman has to work twice as hard as a man to get half as much recognition.*

Despite the efforts of feminists, this is still true. Conversations with friends about their workplaces on top of my own experience regarding hours worked and dedication to a profession vs. promotions received have reinforced my belief that there is still a glass ceiling. I am an optimist, though, and would welcome stories any of

you care to share which could alter my point of view.

RULE #4: *We are all really human.*

On a more positive note, some of the best conversations I have had at work have been with men. I have been truly impressed by the revelation of personal problems by a male coworker. One of our discussions later caused me to cry at what he had been through, while others have allowed me to believe, when I most needed to, that a man could understand my disappointments as well as my dreams.

RULE #5: *Nice guys finish last (or at least have a harder time) at work...*

It has been very difficult to observe that in order to get respect, I need to be aggressive and not too considerate of others' needs over my own at work.

...But they'll *always* come first in my book.

It's difficult to work with some men, but overall I have been pretty lucky to know the men I do through my work and to learn some things I know I'll use in the future.



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CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

poems, art, ads, book or movie reviews to:
BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA
02140. To submit text only by email, please send
your article to *both* lindab@shore.net and
starfurry@worldnet.att.net.



November 2 - 3 ♦ Saturday - Sunday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Training. 8:30 am - 5pm at the Porter Exchange Building in Porter Sq., Cambridge. This 2 day training will teach you to become a better public speaker. Future participation as a GLBSB speaker is encouraged, but not necessary, to attend. Sliding scale fees (more if you can, less if you can't) are: \$25 for teenagers aged 14 -17, \$35 for low-income persons and college students, \$65 for other attendees. *Members of the bisexual community are welcome and strongly encouraged to attend. This is a great opportunity to help increase bi visibility and educate the public on bisexuality.* For info or to register, call the Speakers Bureau at (617) 450-9776.

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BBWN

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November 3 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. 7-9 p.m. First hour's topic: "How does your attraction to females and males differ?" (see October 6th)

November 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see October 2nd)

November 8 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. at The Casual Cup, 1362 Beacon Street, Brookline. Come get the weekend off to a good start. Catch up with old friends and make new ones. Nearest T stop is Coolidge Corner, on the C branch of the Green Line. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

November 13 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people interested in the work of the BRC.

November 15 ♦ Friday

Biversity Story Reading, 7 pm. at Jay and Heidi's. Bring a favorite short story and snacks or a beverage to share. For directions, call (617) 782-2389 or email js@aq.org. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people.



November 16 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch. 11:30 a.m. Mexican fare at Baja Cafe, 109 Dartmouth Street in Boston. The nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line. Biversity Boston is the mixed gender bisexual network of Boston.

November 19 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see October 2nd)

November 24 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch. Noon at Lynn's in Newton Center. Enjoy great food and drink while relaxing with other bi and bi-friendly women. T accessible. Call Lynn at 965-5564 for directions.

Biversity Brunch. 1:30 p.m. Ethiopian food will be shared at the Addis Red Sea, 544 Tremont St. in Boston's South End. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

Choro Allegro Concert. 3 p.m. at the Church of the Covenant on the corner of Berkeley and Newbury Streets in Boston. For discount tickets, call Julie at (617) 731-2307.

November 26 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. See old friends and make new ones while helping to get out your newsletter. It'll be one of the most fun, and productive, nights you'll have all month. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office.



*Contributing to
BiWomen is a great way
to get those creative
juices flowing!*

This is your newsletter.
Articles on any topic are
welcome!

Letters, poems, black-and-
white artwork, doodles,
jokes, experiences,
ideas....

See page two for sub-
mission guidelines, or
leave a message at the of-
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Such a deal!

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. For info call (617) 424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st Tuesdays and 3rd Thursdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group meets 7:30 - 9 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday and 3rd Thursday of each month. 1st Tuesday location is at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge. 3rd Thursday location varies. Call (617) 354-8807 for info and Thursday locations.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm, at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston (in the same building as the bi office). Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

October 1 - 31

Instincts and Prospects. All month, BBWN member Kathrine Douthit's paintings will be displayed at the Forum Associates gallery, 1435 Beacon St., Brookline. Kathrine's cartoon "All Bi, Myself" appears regularly in BiWomen. Gallery hours are Mon. - Fri., 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

October 2 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual. 7-9 pm at the Bi Office. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info (617) 424-9595.

October 6 ♦ Sunday

Rollerblading. Meet at 11 am next to the pine trees in the park at the corner of JFK St. and Memorial Dr. in Cambridge. You can rent skates nearby for \$7/hr. and/or take a one hour lesson for \$10. Nearest T stop is Harvard on the Red Line. For info, or an alternate plan in case of rain, call Ann at (617) 923-8716. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. First hour's topic: "When did you begin to suspect you were bi?". A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space. Bispac takes place 7-9 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.

October 9 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Becoming more involved in the BRC is great way to keep the community active. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people.

October 11 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. at The Casual Cup, 1362 Beacon Street, Brookline. Enjoy great desserts, juices, coffee and the company of other bi and bi-friendly people. Nearest T stop is Coolidge Corner, on the C branch of the Green Line.

October 13 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Bicycling Trip on the MinuteMan Trail. We got rained out in August, so think sunshine. Meet at 10:00 a.m. on the access road near the bus station at the Alewife T stop on the Red Line. For more info, contact Jonathon at (617) 648-6884 or at urbach@fas.harvard.edu. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. Swing into fall with your friends at BBWN. Since the

summer kept many of us busy with other things, let's have a great turnout so we can catch up with each other and dance late into the night. Upstairs at 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge. 9 p.m.

October 15 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see October 2nd)

October 16 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Planning Meeting. BBWN needs your participation for an active and lucrative fall. Exciting potential events include hosting a dance party before the end of the year and organizing a regional gathering for the spring. Get involved and contribute your own ideas. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. All women welcome.

October 17 ♦ Thursday

Biversity Movie Night. Contact Lars at (617) 641-3573 or lars@world.std.com to discuss when and where to meet. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

October 19 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Halloween potluck brunch at noon. Get an early start on your Halloween celebrations with us at Kathrine's new place in Brookline. Costumes are encouraged. T accessible. Call Kathrine at 738-5383 for directions. All women welcome.



Biversity Brunch. 11 a.m. at Thornton's, 100 Peterborough Street in the Fenway area of Boston. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

October 25 ♦ Friday

Biversity Games Night, 7 p.m., at Jay and Heidi's. Please join us for a friendly evening of fun and games. Bring a game, a friend, something to munch on, or all three. Call (617) 782-2389 or email js@aq.org for directions. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

October 27 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch. Noon. Choose from great vegetarian Vietnamese and Chinese dishes at Buddha's Delight on Beach Street (between Harrison and Washington Sts.) in Boston's Chinatown. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

November 1 ♦ Friday

BiWomen submission deadline. The Dec./Jan. issue's theme is Erotica. Share your own hot stories or poems, review an erotic book, show us your erotic art/photos, or explain your thoughts on the subject. Send articles, calendar entries, essays,

CALENDAR continues on page 11

The Erotica Issue

Cecilia Tan on The Life of a Bisexual Erotica Writer

by Ava Perry

Cecilia Tan's business card reads "writer, editor, sexuality activist." The first two I know all about: her erotic fiction has graced the pages of Ms. Magazine, Paramour, and Penthouse, including a current appearance in Best America Erotica 1996 edited by Susie Bright, and the upcoming Best Lesbian Erotica 1997 edited by Tristan Taormino. She founded Circlet Press to publish works of erotic science fiction and fantasy that had no market elsewhere, and has edited over twenty anthologies under the Circlet imprint. But "sexuality activist" I had to know more about.

AP: Where does erotica fit into activism?

CT: Well, I write a fair number of political essays, for newsletters, journals like *Sojourner*, books like *Bisexual Politics*, and more often than not I'm writing something about sex, erotica, the feminist sex wars, women's freedom of expression and sexual freedom, stuff like that. But I feel like my real "activism"—that is, the way I'm trying to actually change the world for the better—is through my erotic fiction. People who read my stories are affected by them—moved, touched, aroused, compelled. Next to coming out and being a living example of a happy, sex-positive, polyamorous bisexual, portraying characters with alternative sexual lifestyles is one of the most effective ways to open people's minds to different erotic possibilities.

AP: Do you promote certain sexual agendas or types of activism in your erotica?

CT: Most of the characters in my erotica are bisexual. Sometimes this comes up in the story, other times it doesn't, depending on what the story or plot calls for. Once in a while a character is straight or gay as required by the story. Other times it is in a science fiction or fantasy context where there is no bipolar division of sexualities, and so folks are "bi" (or "omni") by default. I try to extend

Cecilia Tan continues on page 7

Candy, Anyone?

A Phone Sex Operator Speaks Out

by Sue Rooney

When I was approached by the editors of *BiWomen* to write an article about phone sex for the Erotica issue, I thought initially it would be a piece of cake. Some of you know me through my involvement with BBWN, the BRC, etc. I figured I would just shoot the shit a little, copy some stuff from my journal, and that would be it. Sister, was I wrong! Erotica for money is a complicated business. Herewith, I will attempt to answer the most asked questions:

What's it like, what's it like?

Amazingly easy. Let's face it - a guy calls, he's hot, he's hard, and wants to come real bad. How difficult can this be? It's funny, it's strange it's a lot of things. I laugh a lot more than I do at my regular job. By day I'm an ordinary tax accountant. At night I become ... Candy Savage, phone sex operator.

How does it work?

I work for a service as an independent contractor. They advertise in the usual magazines and alternative newspapers, and the clients call them. They take a credit card number, check it out, and then call me with the clients name and number. They tell me whatever they know about the client, such as prior requests, areas of interest, etc. Then I call the client, and they reimburse me for the call, plus pay me a per-minute fee. The client is billed on his credit card.

What's a typical call like?

Having ascertained that I am speaking to the correct person, I immediately change my voice to an intimate, purring tone. I go through a set of routine questions just to get the ball rolling:

"Hi, I'm (character name), how are you this evening?"

"Why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself?"

"What do you look like/do you want to know what I look like?"

"Maybe you're feeling a little horny?"

"Do you have a particular fantasy in mind?"

Depending on the answers, particularly to this last question, I branch off into phase two of the call. About half the time, the client wants me to set up and control the fantasy and in that case, I go through a sheil that has come to be almost routine:

Phone Sex continues on page 8

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

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Volunteers of the Month



Rosalie
Ellyn Ruthstrom
Debbie Block-
Schwenk
Kevin Block-
Schwenk
Ann Goglia

Janet

Katherine

And many more
wonderful women!
You know who you
are! Thank you,
thank you, thank
you!

Thanks again!

BiWomen is published
bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this
issue of BiWomen:

Linda Blair

Debbie Block-Schwenk

Printed on
recycled paper

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

BBWN needs you to volunteer!

Deborah, BBWN's fabulous 'Newsletter Mailing Diva', has done a wonderful job over the past year - mastering the new postal codes, rounding us all up to turn out for the mailings, and generally making sure you get your newsletter. Deborah would now like to give another BBWN member a turn. *Many other volunteer opportunities also exist!*

**Call Linda at (617) 424-9595 to
find out how you can get more
involved.**

Steering Committee Minutes: October 16, 1996

Present: Ananda, Deborah, Ellyn, Linda,
Janet, 'tina

Fundraising: After discussing the idea of sponsoring a dance party in a paid public space, the group decided to instead pursue the idea of a party at a member's home. A subcommittee of Ananda, Deborah and Ellyn will meet and finalize details. (See page 3 for details on the party.)

Newsletter: Deborah, BBWN's Newsletter Mailing 'Diva' expressed her desire to find someone else to take on the responsibility for mailings. She would like to find one or more members she can train during the next couple of mailings to take on the duties. This raised the point of informing new people of the different ways they can volunteer for BBWN and the BRC.

Finances: There was another discussion about looking at past finances to determine expense trends and revenue fluctuations in order to consider devising a more formal budget. BBWN Treasurer Robyn Ochs will be asked to bring in past financial records and to store them in the office.

Notes submitted by Ellyn

Coming in *Bi Women*:

The Theme for the Feb/March issue

will be

Mothers and Daughters

DEADLINE : January 3, 1997

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten), on disk (PC or Mac) or by e-mail (to lindab@shore.net and starfurry@worldnet.att.net. Please submit only *text* by e-mail. We cannot accept your art or photos electronically.) Include your name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us. Otherwise, we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or use just your first name.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters,
black-and-white art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

Bisexual Resource Center Annual Meeting

We'll be electing new Board members, and updating the community on our projects.
Please mark your calendar and plan to attend!

Community participation is vital to the work of the BRC. To learn how to get involved or run for Board membership, call Linda at (617) 424-9595.

**Wednesday
December 11, 7 p.m.**
at the Bi Office

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this newsletter are copyrighted
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*BBWN requests your presence at a Benefit House Party.
Saturday, December 14, 8pm until...*

Please join us for music and dancing, great food, hot drinks, cool women and their friends, and help us raise funds for the programs of Boston's bisexual women's network.

Performances and open mic from 9-10pm featuring:

Mandy Neff, Performance Poet

and

Ann Golia, Storyteller

Donation \$5 - \$50

Cocktail Attire Encouraged

at the home of Ananda and Amy in Somerville near Davis Square on the Red Line. For information and directions call (617) 776-1008.

Movie Review: *Bound*

by Maria Pramaggiore

At long last, the revenge of the femme! Whereas the (presumably straight) femme fatale has seduced, bothered and bewildered the hard-boiled anti-hero of *film noir* since the forties—and paid the price—in *Bound*, directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski, the femme lesbian has her day. And revenge is sweet. In *Bound*, Violet (Jennifer Tilly) and Corky (Gina Gershon) form a dynamic duo of femme and butch fatale, respectively, and concoct a foolproof plan to relieve Caesar (Joe Pantoliano), Violet's money-laundering Mafia boyfriend, of more than 2 million dollars. In the tradition of the 90's "gangsters gone wrong" genre (*Reservoir Dogs*; *The Usual Suspects*), the plan hits a few snags, and Corky and Violet must prove their mettle and their commitment to each other literally under the gun. Lust drives the women's larceny, but ultimately the plan cannot succeed without trust: these women are true partners in crime—in the bedroom and out.

Stereotypes of butch and femme are dredged up and worked over in the film, much like the various substances Corky must extract from the plumbing system of the apartment she is renovating. Don't be fooled by

Corky's pickup-driving, tattooed handywoman routine or Violet's velvet dresses and vamp-red fingernails, though. The directors make some surprisingly creative narrative and visual choices that undermine this apparent butch/femme opposition. Marshaling the traditional sexual powers of the femme, Violet is the unknown quantity and holds both Caesar and Corky in thrall.

Bound continues on page 10

Wobbles Info

WOBBLES, West of Boston Lesbians, has activities in the MetroWest area and an extensive calendar of Gay/Lesbian/Bi/Transgendered activities in the area. For info write to them at P.O. Box 292, Marlboro MA 01752.



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Jim Poli, Instructor

Queer by Choice

Dr. Vera Whisman, author of *Queer by Choice* will be speaking on the topic "The Question of Choice" on December 12 at UMASS Amherst at 12:30 PM. This free event is part of the GLBT Studies Lecture Series and is co-sponsored by the Stonewall Center at UMass. For more info on this and other programs at the Stonewall Center, call them at 413-545-4824 or send e-mail to stonewall@stuaf.umass.edu

who says...

for now
my attention moves away
from mouth, neck, shoulders
inner arms, erect nipples
and the heat of your crotch

turn over I say
get on your knees
my hand fingers nails
glide down your back
firmly grab your cheeks
lightly scratch skin
my strong tongue slides
over clear soft shield
exploring secret places
banned in Boston

the pleasure is found
just below, just above
just beyond the limit
set years before

the pleasure though
is all mine
to give and I do
relishing the excitement
of your ass
pushing against my face
primal animal sounds
calling out to me
yes, oh yes
you stroke your cock
I lick your balls
and pull away
just long enough
to lube my glove
you meet my hand

inviting entry
inviting possibilities
promising us
as much as we can imagine
I slip easily in
to the warmth
my fingers thrill
to the muscles holding me
on the edge

you play with my desire
to fuck you, to take you
the growing hardness
throbbing inside you
brings me to a tension point
I gasp, biting your ass
you rock
moving out
and pushing in
I want you
I say I want to fuck you
I want to fuck you
with more than my tongue, my fingers, my hand
I want your legs in the air
my breast in your mouth
my dildo up your ass

turn over I say
pinching your nipples
I take your cock in my mouth
sliding a condom down the shaft
lingering to savor the moment
we play with the electricity running between us
you finger my throbbing clit
slowing just before I cum
you open another condom
breathlessly I watch
you roll the skin
over my dildo
drip and massage lube
with the warmth of your hand
I am wild, I am in heat
you fill my dripping cunt
with slippery latex fingers
I scream and fall on all fours
beneath me you smile
we laugh out loud

Who Says continues on next page

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Who Says from previous page

I find your mouth
so sweet, so sweet we kiss
sucking darting tongues
I want to devour you
I want to fuck you

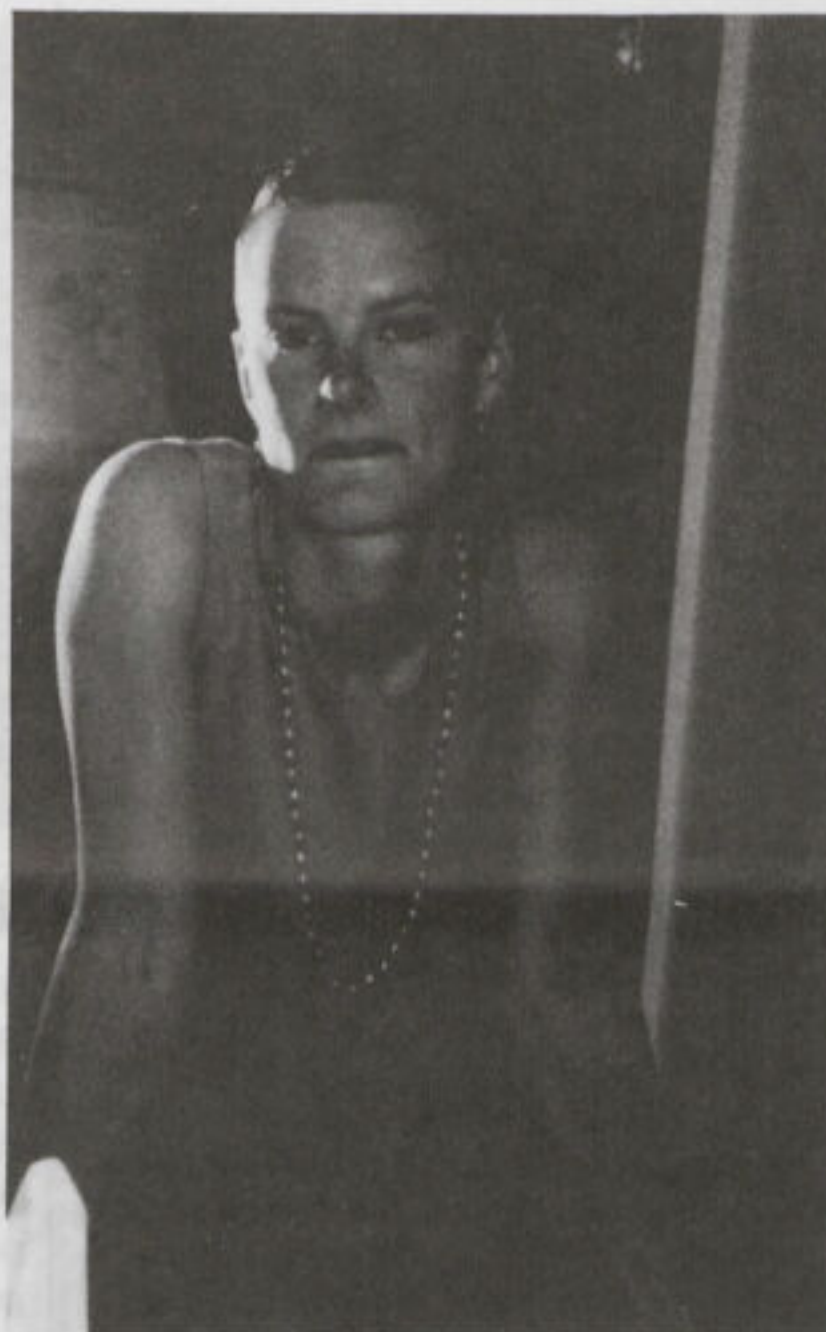
I put your legs in the air
feet on my shoulders
dildo up your ass
there are no words

there are no words
we are transported
to another place and time
our bodies in tune, playing
like fine instruments
a symphony of sound
we are transformed
by the music
of a language
beyond any label
female/male
it is pure energy
a communion of spirit
shameless and powerful

there are no words
we roar like lions
howl like wolves
trumpet like elephants
building to a crescendo
the grand finale
an epiphany
takes our breath away

crying like babies
we deserve a standing ovation
but can't get up
our bodies will not be moved
we laugh, we laugh out loud
a tangle of latex, lube, sweat and saliva
exhausted and exhilarated
who says safer sex isn't hot
oh baby, who says...

Lani Ka'ahumanu
aloha@slip.net



"READY, WAITING",

PHOTO BY DEBORAH LEVINE, 1996

Hot or Not?

by [REDACTED]

If what I like is erotica and what *you* like is pornography, then what do you call things that I "don't like" but still am drawn to, make me squirm, make me wet...take my breath away?

I've been reading erotica since I was old enough to steal the dirty books out of my father's underwear drawer. I started with *Portnoy's Complaint* and went on to a really trashy report from a "doctor" on *menage a trois*. I was hooked in an "I like it, it's hot" and "I hate it, throw it away" cycle. My version of binge and purge.

I would beg, borrow or steal hot books. (Well, I really only stole from my dad. I knew he'd be way too embarrassed to ever ask where his books went.) Then I would throw them away. Always carefully hiding them from my mother; who knew when she might even search through the garbage?

Hot continues on page 10

Bi Writers Web Page

The Bisexual Resource Center has added an "Opportunities for Bisexual Writers" page to its web site which will list magazines, newsletters, anthologies, and other publications calling for submissions from bisexual writers. If you have a call for submissions you would like listed send email to bryant@scd.teradyne.com. Your email should contain either the URL of a web page or an HTML file which contain submission information.

The BRC web site is at: <http://www.norn.org/pub/other-orgs/brc>.

Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press is celebrating their 15th anniversary!! Kitchen Table is still the only publishing house in the country dedicated to the work of women of color of all races/ethnicities, national origins, socioeconomic classes and sexual orientations. Works they have published include: *The Bride Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* and *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. For information about them, contact them at P.O. Box 40-4920, Brooklyn, NY 11240-4920, or call them at (718) 935-1082.



'SPRAWL'

PHOTO BY DEBORAH LEVINE, 1996

"The Dream"

The two women have dreamt of this moment.

Quiet, intimate conversation, music that's just loud enough to hear.

One soft, flickering candle, just enough light so that they are left in shadows where they're reclining together on soft pillows.

Their words speak of desires, their hearts and souls yearn to connect

with someone who knows them in ways others do not.

The intimacies they share take them to places they've never been.

Their separate journeys have brought them together so they might give each other what they've been seeking.

Quiet words lead tentative fingertips to reach out and gently

touch face, neck, shoulders, and more.

Lips quiver with excitement, anticipation and, yes...fear.

But, from the first soft kiss, fear is replaced by something stronger...

an inner knowing that this is what they've been desiring.

What they give to each other is more than physical.

It reaches heights of spirituality known to very few.

It is their unanswered prayer.

Passion begins to stir in both of them.

Soft lips opening to receive gently probing tongues.

Hands and fingers start to explore the curve of necks, contours of waist and hips, the warmth of inner thighs.

Clothing falls away with languid slowness.

Hands slowly, and, oh so softly, glide over breasts, teasing the nipples.

Tongues meet skin, creating wet trails over gentle slopes.

Delicate kisses become gentle bites as passion grows.

It seems so right, so natural to them both.

Finally, no barriers remain.

Bodies meet, cool skin comes together.

Hot, wet regions are discovered and explored.

Fingers stroke, sliding over silky skin, no lingering now.

Expressions of passion are shared, voices cry out with urgency.

Muscles tighten, bodies arch, deeper, harder, faster.

Finally, one woman, then the other, spasms against the fingers.

Moaning, they collapse against each other.

They wish it would never end, but the flickering candle burns low.

Their whispers and sighs end as they close their eyes and drift off,

lying in each others arms.

Ah, but it's only a dream....

Louise Stunkard



Cecilia Tan from page 1

this "bi" sensibility into the stories and the characters so that it will seem natural, not "a weird kink", and more likely to affect the reader positively. So, as my reasoning goes, if I am exposing readers to positive vibes about bisexuality, I am doing some small part toward making the world a more accepting place for bisexuality.

AP: Do you think it works?

CT: I think so, in some small measure. I opened the eyes of my mom to acceptance of my leather lifestyle through my fiction—that seems to indicate a lot of possibilities for other people in my life.

AP: That seems to imply that you have to be writing sexually-oriented fiction for it to work. What about bisexual characters in non-erotic literature?

CT: Well, I write that, too. But in western literature there have always been characters with "alternative" sexualities, from same sex attraction to S/M-style kink. What is often NOT mentioned is the fact that these characters are usually villains, or secondary heroes who die a tragic death in the course of the book. To me this is neither sex-positive nor erotic, equating sex with evil or with tragedy and death. This is where erotica comes in: erotica, which should ideally be "erotic" in the sense of arousing sexual interest and in the sense of celebrating life and creation. Erotica, as I write it, revolves around sex as an enjoyable, often transformative, experience. So, yeah, the sex has to actually be in there. Otherwise, how do you show in a compelling way that a character has a certain sexuality?

AP: What do you consider some of your most "active" stories?

CT: It was great fun to be in a book edited by Carol Queen and Lawrence Schimel called *Switch Hitters* from Cleis Press. The premise is lesbians writing about gay male characters, and gay men writing about lesbian characters. The one flaw in this premise is that a good number of the contributors identify as bisexual, but it was still great fun. I wrote a story about a young gay college student trying to come out that was loosely based on my own experiences coming out as bi. I wrote a story about a young leather dyke and an old gay leather man in "Looking for Mr. Preston"—the John Preston memorial anthology—which is very erotic for me, but not on a genital level, more on the level of unquestioning love and loyalty. It challenges definitions of what makes a person "acceptable" and whether they are based on genitalia or not. There was the gender dysphoric vampire in "Tale of Christina" from *Dark Angels*, who had passed as a man in the 1800's, but now finds it difficult to do so with

the trend for women to wear pants, short hair, and so on...

AP: What other erotica writers do you enjoy? Who else puts out this kind of sex-positive stuff?

CT: Oh, there's tons of stuff coming out now. The pioneers of course were Pat Califia, whose *Melting Point* and *Macho Sluts* collections are great. In Pat's footsteps there seems to be this whole cabal of bisexual/pansexual/omnisexual writers who can do it all, straight, queer, bi, transgendered.... Carol Queen of course, Thomas S. Roche, M. Christian, we all pop up again and again in these anthologies together. There's a lot in anthologies now, like the *Herotica* series, which I like a lot even if I don't like every story in the book. I like the books that mix gay, straight, bi, etc... stories together, like *Noirotica* edited by Thomas Roche and *Backstage Passes* edited by Amelia G. I have to admit though, that I don't have time to read as much as I would like to, so most of what I've read are anthologies I'm actually in. After all, they send me free copies of them.

AP: Do you have any advice for young writers out there who are thinking of going into the erotica field?

CT: Yes. Write what turns you on. Let your imagination totally go, what are the things that make you drip, that make you try to type with one hand and hold the vibrator with the other? Those are the things that are worth writing. Making writing financially rewarding is hard, so it has to be rewarding to you in some other way. Don't write what you think other people will want to read. Write your thing, and then try to sell it. In my case, I wrote something with no market and had to create the market myself... it worked, though, didn't it?

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Announcing the On-line Bisexual Bookstore

The Bisexual Resource Center is pleased to announce the opening of the *Bisexual Bookstore* on the World Wide Web. It will be the one place that stocks virtually every bi book available and is equally accessible to bi people no matter how far they live from a major city. We are also pleased to be able to offer many of these books at below list price.

Books purchased through the Bisexual Bookstore help to finance the work of the Bisexual Resource Center through our arrangement with Amazon Books. As always, we urge you to support your local queer bookstore but if you can't get to one, or you can't find what you're looking for, or they have an attitude problem about bisexuals, please consider shopping here and supporting the BRC. The URL for the Bisexual Bookstore is: <http://www.norn.org/pub/other-orgs/brc/bookstore/>

Phone Sex from page 1

"Well, first I want you to take out your cock and give it a squeeze, just for me. Does that feel good? Is it getting nice and hard? How big is it? I really want to take it in my mouth, and give it a nice big wet kiss. Maybe suck on your balls. Take them in my mouth one at a time, and let them roll over my tongue. Then I'd work my way up to the tip, stick my tongue into the pee hole. (At this point, the client invariably says, 'you don't have to do that' and I respond) Oh but I want to do it. I love it when a little bit of pre-cum squirts out. Give's me a taste of what will come after. That really makes me suck like crazy. Oh, I'm getting so wet. I need you to fuck me, please, now, right away. Yes, eight inches is the perfect size for me. If you're a really good boy, I'll let you fuck me in the ass. It's nice and tight back there. First you have to put in a finger, get me stretched out a little bit. Then I want you to hold my cheeks apart with your hands. Rest the tip of your cock against the hole, and push forward with your hips until your balls are against my bottom. That's a nice comfortable place for them to be. Now just fuck me. Are you ready to cum.. squirt..pop..burst..fill me up with your sweet load?"

This is all interspersed with either soft, whispery, whimpering or sharp, loud, gasping words and noises on both our parts. Then when the moment of truth arrives, there are the universal sounds that all wimmin and men can't help but make. Then they hang up. Or if they have some class, which is not often, they thank me, and make a little post-coital chit-chat and that's it.

When the caller has their own fantasy, what's that like? Are they really weird or what?

Most of the time they are almost the same as a routine call. It's just that the caller (through innate intelligence, or a real lot of experience) is more educated to his own tastes, and has a definite idea of how the call should go. They often have a script or role-play in mind that can be either less or more involved. Everything from escaped-prisoner-and-the-warden's-wife to okay-now-it's-your-turn-to-be-the-buffalo. I'll give you

an example:

The client says he has a set fantasy he wants me to work with. He's out driving in his car and the car breaks down. He's in sort of a middle-class, residential neighborhood. He realizes he has to call triple-A. He goes up to one of the houses and rings the door-bell. An attractive, middle-aged, black woman comes to the door. He explains his predicament. She agrees to let him use the phone in the front hall. He enters. There is a middle-aged, white man (presumably her husband) sitting in the living room, reading the paper. The woman is wearing a caftan and sandals. The man is dressed in a business suit except that he has taken off his jacket. We end up spending the night together, and I make it with both of them. "Now go."

So, I go... "you pick up the phone and dial the number. You're talking to triple-A and you're describing the situation. They put you on hold. You feel the woman start to rub up against you. She reaches around you from behind and starts stroking your cock through your pants. You start to freak out, thinking her husband can see the two of you, what's going to happen? You look over at the husband and he looks up from his paper. He smiles a little to let you know he understands what's going on and it's okay. He goes back to reading the paper. The wife unzips your pants and takes out your cock which is hard already. Somehow the phone is hung up and you are facing each other and kissing. Then the husband is behind you, pulling your pants down....." Well, you get the idea. They're all different, but they're all the same. You just keep talking about people doing it with each other, in different ways with various accouterments until the caller gets off.

Phone Sex continues on next page

ALL Bi, MYSELF in What turns us on?! by K. DOUTHIT



Phone Sex from previous page

What happens to you when you're talking on the phone? Do you get excited, or is it just boring because you do it so much?

Well, it depends. Did you get excited reading what I just wrote? Sometimes I think it looks a little silly all written out in black-and-white. But when you are speaking the words, whispering, begging, making little coos of pleasure, all through slightly wet, slightly pouted lips.... where was I?

Okay, at first I got excited all the time, talking about sex on the phone. I could feel myself getting wet, and sometimes, I confess, I would even masturbate while I was talking to a client. I was always pretending to be masturbating, so actually doing it was pretty easy. But after a few weeks, the thrill is gone. The routine calls just don't do it for me. If I'm talking on the phone late at night, and I'm tired, my attention does wander. I start to say things like, "now I'm going to push my cock right down your throat" or whatever. Fortunately, the callers are too far gone to notice at that point.

I found that I can't do something else while I am talking, I need to focus that much. I've read about women who do their housework while they're talking on a portable phone, and I just couldn't do that. I need to concentrate on each client, and I feel that I'm giving them their money's worth that way. But in between calls I can do whatever I want. Eat, sleep, watch TV. I can even talk to my friends on the phone, since I have a separate line just for my phone sex calls. Now, I really only get excited if a client has a particular fantasy which I find erotic. There are two or three areas of B/D (Bondage/Domination) that I fantasize about in my private life, and if a caller is interested in those areas and is fairly articulate, I can get very turned on. I can't say too much more, since I would like to keep a little mystery, but I will say this, I do like to be a naughty girl.

Does being bi influence how you talk on the phone? Do you ever talk to women callers?

Our service only accepts male callers. But many services do accept female callers and eventually I would like to work for one of them. I think that being bisexual, I know what I find exciting about women's bodies, and I just describe that. I know that men have a slightly different take on what is sexy in a woman, but they get the idea. When I'm describing myself to them, I'm really describing a woman I would find attractive. Most heterosexual men have fantasies about watching women make it with each other. I've also done the so-called two girl call. I get on a conference call with another woman working for the service and a male client. And we play off

each other, telling each other what we want to do, etc. That's actually pretty cool. I think watching two wimmin make love is very beautiful and I will say that during the call. Of course, I really do think that, they just don't know it.

What have you learned about sex, or about men by doing this job?

I just want to say for the record, that according to my unofficial but extensive sample, almost every man in America has an 8 inch cock. Not 8 1/2 inches. Not 7 1/2 inches. Exactly 8 inches. What are the odds? It's a relief if a man admits to having a 6 inch cock. I want to kiss him. Seriously...I've learned that most men are pigs.

Okay... really seriously... there's the good thing and the bad thing about masturbation. On the good side - you know what you like best. You're inside yourself, so you know what you are feeling when you are feeling it, and can make immediate "adjustments" better than any other person. On the bad side - there is just you. There is not the element of spontaneity that comes with another person. In spite of one's limitless imagination and all the erotic media available - books, magazines, movies, peep shows and even strip clubs - there is still the need for that private, one-on-one interaction with another human. For the most part phone sex satisfies that need in a relatively safe way for all concerned. Until virtual reality improves to the point where it is, in-fact, virtually real, phone sex is here to stay.

Well that's it, folks. Your twenty minutes are up. And it didn't even cost you \$2.99 per minute. You can always make a donation to *BiWomen*. And remember.. never lift anything heavier than your skirt.

In the News

The Wellington (Australia) Bisexual Women's Group newsletter in September reprinted an article from the May/June issue of *Girl World* magazine entitled "The Bisexual Closet." It describes in great detail the invisibility of bisexual women within the lesbian community and the issues the bi political movement has raised to counter this exclusion, covering everything from the importance of bisexuals to the women's movement to the negative stereotypes of bisexuals.

This and many other newsletters are available for browsing and borrowing at the bi office. Call (617) 424-9595 for office hours or more info.



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Sources of Support

The Healing and Arts Studio has new fall hours on Wednesdays and Fridays 12-6 PM and Thursdays and Saturdays 12-8 PM. This space dedicated to survivors of ritual abuse and welcoming all survivors of childhood abuse features support groups, a video theater, a gallery and gift shop and other activities. For more info contact them at 731 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02118, (617) 859-9561.

Lesbian Daughters of Alcoholics is a support group held at the Fenway Community Health Center helping women deal with issues related to an alcoholic parent. For more information, call them at (617) 267-0900 x302

Bound from page 3

Violet's indeterminacy, not surprisingly, is intimately connected to her possible bisexuality but nevertheless befits the *film noir* atmosphere of sexual tension permeated by mutual suspicion. Ex-con Corky is also a figure of questionable loyalty but less so than Violet; Corky's not been with a man, so her possible defection is attributed to her previous experience with a larcenous lover.

Corky describes the act of stealing with a partner as sexual and, although the metaphor is well-suited to the story, it is not developed as thoroughly, or erotically, as it could be. As an erotic thriller, the film packs a wallop early on, but attenuates the women's physical relationship in favor of fist fights and Mafia hit men during the *denouement*. Although several steamy scenes between the women are all far more appealing than those of any recent mainstream or independent film, I hesitate to describe the film as erotically charged. Carrying out the plan requires the women's physical separation and their only means of communication—the phone—leaves something to be desired. Ultimately, the heat generated by Tilly and Gershon is dissipated through the seemingly endless plot twists and turns that draw our attention to Violet and Caesar's relationship and Violet's quick wits.

Visually sumptuous, the film treats us to the rich colors and well-articulated spaciousness of Chicago high-rise apartment life. Bill Pope's cinematography recalls Hitchcock in well-constructed overhead shots and Scorsese in slow motion and wide-angle effects that magnify violent moments. The sleazy Mafia world Caesar and Violet inhabit is constantly reinforced by visual references to toilets and plumbing, whereas the women's dangerous game of seduction is developed through a motif of fingers and hands and some subtly ironic closet shots. The *noir* setting and camera work are embellished with a jazz soundtrack reminiscent of Dahl's *The Last Seduction*, a 90's *noir* film that also turns on the seductive power of a ruthless woman. Unlike Wendy Kroy of *TLS*, however, the femme and butch fatale in *Bound*

cannot rely upon a universe of pussy-mad men too stupid to save their skins. Instead, the women must rely on their own wits and each other—a dangerous proposition, given the sexually charged and deceptive nature of their relationship.

Gershon and Tilly's performances are excellent; they balance each character's amorality with her desirability, which is just as it should be in a *noir* universe. Look for Susie Bright in a cameo as a leather femme who turns Corky's head at an aptly named girl bar ("The Watering Hole").

Hot from page 5

I went through many "classics" like *The Happy Hooker*, *The Story of O*, *Macho Sluts*, not to mention many books by that famous author Anonymous. I was fascinated and troubled about what to do with them, especially those with scenes of punishment, spanking or denigration whose actions would have roused me to protest in real life, yet somehow could still deliver the forbidden rush and always make me come as I read them.

I bought and managed to keep all of Nancy Friday's books, which were written as an examination of women's fantasies. My copies would open right up to "the good parts". The problem is, the good parts were also what I would consider to be the *bad parts*—impossible situations at the zoo, images of women kidnapped and overwhelmed by silent strangers, lesbians who *did* actually need a good fuck.

My long time girlfriend never quite understood why I liked those books. It was mostly my shameful secret.

And so it was for many years, until one night at the end of a wild session of sex, my male partner asked me what I fantasized about, what was hot for me, what scenes in books made me sizzle? "Well, that's pretty personal," I thought and wondered if I could get by with some vague generalizations. After nearly passing out from holding my breath I finally shared one of my favorite "bad things" I loved/hated to read. This was not only warmly received, but hotly rewarded. This led to dragging out a number of the secret stash and some very interesting sessions, often with him reading to me and encouraging me to like what I liked.

I stopped throwing my books away. I have also stopped trying to make my fantasies correct enough for others, or worrying that because I liked the story I really had to approve of the act in real life.

For me, it became true at last that when it's hot it's hot and when it's not it's not.

BETH DAMSKY, MSW, LICSW

Psychotherapy and Consultation

2326B MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02140
617 497 6581

CALENDAR *continued from page 12*

January 3 ♦ Friday

BiWomen submission deadline. The Feb./March issue's theme is Mothers and Daughters. Please consider writing about your own experiences a mother, being the daughter of a bisexual mother, or asking your mother to write about having a bi daughter. How has being bi affected your relationship with your mother or daughter(s)? Send articles, calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, book or movie reviews to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140. To submit *text only* by email, please send your article to *both* lindab@shore.net and starfurry@worldnet.att.net.

January 5 ♦ Sunday

BRC Potluck and Volunteer's Meeting. 4 p.m. Anyone who has volunteered for the BRC or would like to in the future is encouraged to attend. Bring food or a beverage to share and join us to discuss the ongoing work of the BRC and how best to get it done.

BiSpace, 7 p.m. First hour's topic: "Challenging Biphobia/Building Freedom" (See December 1st).

January 8 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe space for women to connect with the bisexual community. 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m. at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

BiWomen Subscription Form

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January 8 ♦ Wednesday

BRC Board Meeting 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Community participation is what keeps the Bi Resource Center strong. Your input and ideas are needed and welcome.

January 10 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. at The Casual Cup, 1362 Beacon Street, Brookline. This event is a great chance to meet and socialize over tasty treats and java. \$5 cover charge, which goes toward paying the musician(s) who will perform, includes \$1.50 toward the cost of a beverage. Nearest T stop is Coolidge Corner on the C branch of the Green Line.

January 11 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch. Noon at Ann's in Watertown. Join us for culinary delights and a cozy afternoon lounging by the fireplace. T accessible by bus. Call Ann at (617) 923-8716 for directions.

January 14 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see December 4th)

January 18 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch. 11:30 a.m. Join us for good conversation and a hearty Mexican meal at Picante, 735 Mass. Ave in Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Central on the Red Line.

January 19 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Xena Warrior Princess Party at 3 p.m. Spend an afternoon watching past episodes of this action adventure show with strong, sexy women warrior characters at Lynne's in North Cambridge. If you plan to attend, please R.S.V.P. to Lynne by phone at (617) 576-1097 or email at llevine@mit.edu.

January 24 ♦ Friday

Biversity Games Night, 7 p.m. at Jay and Heidi's in Brighton. Bring a snack to share and/or a fun game to play. Call (617) 782-4235 or email js@aq.org for directions. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

January 26 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch. 1:00 p.m. at Christopher's at 1920 Mass. Ave. in Porter Square, Cambridge. The nearest T stop is Porter on the Red Line.

January 28 ♦ Tuesday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Besides being vitally important to the operation of BBWN, the newsletter stuffing is one of the most fun and social events we have. We want to see you there! 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office.

SUBMIT!!

TO BIWOMEN!

This is your newsletter. Articles on any topic are welcome!

Letters, poems, black-and-white artwork, doodles, jokes, experiences, ideas....

See page two for submission guidelines, or leave a message at the office for anyone on the Editorial Team

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Please note that the Coming Out as Bisexual group regularly scheduled for Wednesday, January 1st will be canceled for the holiday.



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The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29-33 Stanhope Street, behind Club Cafe' and right next door to Bertucci's. For info call (617) 424-9595.

Ongoing Events

1st Tuesdays and 3rd Thursdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group meets 7:30 - 9 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday and 3rd Thursday of each month. 1st Tuesday location is at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge. 3rd Thursday location varies. Call (617) 354-8807 for info and Thursday locations.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

GLBisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm, at the Boston Living Center, 29-33 Stanhope Street, Boston (in the same building as the bi office). Wheelchair accessible. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

CALENDAR

December 1 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. 7-9 p.m. the Bi Office. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. First hour's topic: "Building the Families We Want/ Negotiating the Families We Have". A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for the space.

December 4 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. An informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. A small donation is requested to help pay for the space. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info (617) 424-9595.

December 7 ♦ Saturday

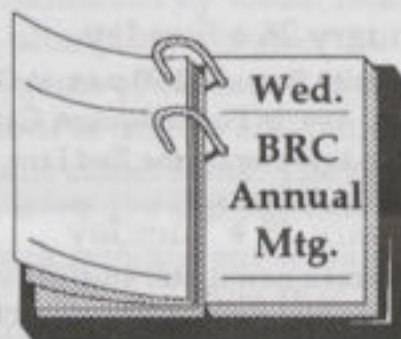
BBWN Potluck Brunch at noon. Join us for good food, fun and a grand kickoff to your end of year festivities at Robyn's near Central Square, Cambridge. Call Robyn at (617) 576-1066 or email her at ochs@world.std.com for info and directions. All women welcome.

December 8 ♦ Sunday

BBWN Dancing at Ryle's. Dance late into the night with a club full of very hot women. Upstairs at 212 Hampshire St., Inman Square, Cambridge. Meet us at 8:00 p.m. for refreshments across the street at the S & S Deli or join us on the dance floor around 9:30 p.m.

December 11 ♦ Wednesday

Bisexual Resource Center Annual Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. Please come and make your thoughts known. We will be electing new board members and reporting on our successes over the past year. Open to all bi and bi-friendly people.



December 13 ♦ Friday

Bi Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. at The Casual Cup, 1362 Beacon Street, Brookline. Enjoy yummy desserts, acoustic music and the company of new and old friends. \$5 cover charge includes \$1.50 toward the cost of a beverage. Nearest T stop is Coolidge Corner, on the C branch of the Green Line.



December 14 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Benefit House Party, 8 p.m. at Ananda and Amy's in Somerville. Please join us for music and dancing, great food, hot drinks, cool women and their friends, and to raise much needed funds for the programs of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. Performances and open mic from 9 - 10 p.m. \$5 - \$50 admission/donation. Please turn out to show your support for the Network and to have a rousing good time. For info and directions call (617) 776-1008.

December 17 ♦ Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. 7-9 p.m. (see Dec. 4th)

December 18 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Planning Meeting. There's no better time than the present to get more involved in the network. Participation has waned in recent months and we need your help to change that! Come share your ideas for 1997. 7-9 p.m. at the Bi Office. All women welcome.

December 21 ♦ Saturday

Biversity Brunch. 11 a.m. at the food court of the Prudential Center Mall in Copley Square, Boston. Whatever you're hungry for, you'll find it there. Meet at the tables near the windows (just past the Panda Chinese food vendor). Nearest T stop is Copley on the C branch of the Green line.

December 22 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Video Party and Potluck, 11:30 a.m. at Jay and Heidi's. Bring a dish or drink to share and enjoy an afternoon of grazing and watching videos. Call (617) 782-4235 or email js@aq.org for directions. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.

December 29 ♦ Sunday

Biversity Brunch, 1:00 p.m. Indulge in a scrumptious Korean buffet at Arirang House, 162 Mass. Ave. in Boston. Nearest T stop is Auditorium on the Green line.

December 31 ♦ Tuesday

Biversity New Year's Eve Dinner/ First Night. Meet at 7 p.m. for a vegetarian Vietnamese or Chinese dinner at Buddha's Delight on Beach Street (between Harrison and Washington Sts.) in Boston's Chinatown, and to check out first night activities afterwards. Nearest T stop is Chinatown on the Orange Line. All bi and bi-friendly people welcome.



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